Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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CRASH SPARKS DELAYS AS COMMISSIONER'S M6 PROBE IS DUE

Clearing up after the M6 crash involving a lorry in February

DRIVERS faced more delays on the M6 after a crash left two lanes closed.

A HGV and a car collided on the southbound carriageway between junction 10a and 10, with delays stretching back to Junction 11.

The incident happened around 9.45am on Tuesday, but was cleared by 11.30am.

A 50-year-old man, the driver of the car, was taken to Walsall Manor Hospital complaining of neck and back pain after having to be cut free.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "We were called at 9.46am and a single ambulance attended. The original caller said the vehicle was on the hard shoulder facing the wrong direction after colliding with an HGV. There was damage to the passenger side of the car although admittedly not very much."

The crash came as West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson announced he would be holding a second hearing into a motorway crash that led to the M6 being closed for 24 hours.

Mr Jamieson will review what progress has been made after he made a series of recommendations following an inquiry this year. The original hearing on March 18 followed the 24-hour closure of the M6 following a fatal crash on February 4 which was estimated to have cost the region millions of pounds and left people distressed and stranded.

The hearing was not asked to look into the circumstances of the incident which tragically led to the loss of a life nor to apportion blame, but to examine what action could have been taken by the authorities, including police and Highways England, to mitigate the delays more effectively.

The hearing, next Tuesday, will be to review the progress made since March.

Mr Jamieson said: "Delays like we saw on February 4 following a fatal crash on the M6, cost the economy in the West Midlands millions of pounds with people and goods not able to get to where they were needed. Ultimately those delays cost money, jobs and inconvenience people. They also potentially impact on public safety."

Claims made that new fees have led to a drop in trade

PARKING ROW OVER CHARGES

BUSINESSES have hit out at council chiefs and claimed new parking charges brought in across Sandwell have led to a drop in trade.

Council chiefs have been criticised by firms who say that by introducing charges to the council car park, staff were now parking in town centre car parks, therefore taking spaces previously used by customers. Kevin Onions, director of the Independent Mortgage Advice Bureau on Birmingham Street, is leading the rally cry.

In a letter sent in to the council complaints department, he highlighted how large numbers of council staff were now using Low Town car park and Albert Street car park, instead of the council's own formerly free car park, despite them now both being the same price.

Mr Onions said: "The reason for this is that although it's the same price, they have to walk over the road bridge from the staff car park to the Council House, but they don't from the public car parks.

Solution

"It is ridiculous. You go into the staff car park now and there's lots of spaces, but in the public car parks if you are trying to get a space past 25 past eight in the morning, you are not going to." He also thinks he has a solution to the problem. "I know the council needs the revenue and I'm not suggesting they scrap the charges completely.

"Even if they just made the staff car park 25 per cent cheaper it would encourage them to park there again."

Report by Judith Hawkins

Also seeing the impact is Bairstowes estate agents, also on Birmingham Street. Sales team member Karen Hughes said: "It's an absolute nightmare. They suddenly just all turned up and there was nowhere for any of the staff to park. Instead we have to park further away and walk in."

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: "Staff like everyone else have to pay to park in all the council car parks in Oldbury.

"Shoppers can use short stay parking for up to two hours on streets in the town as well as having the option of other private car parks.

"So far we haven't had any other complaints about long stay parking in the town centre car parks since the new system was introduced. We will continue to monitor the situation to make sure we have the right balance between long and short stay parking in the town."

Julie flies to support of Air Ambulance

Julie Walters CBE is to become an ambassador to the Air Ambulance Charity

SIX-TIME Bafta and Golden Globe award-winning actress Julie Walters is the latest celebrity from the world of television and film to become an ambassador to the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.

Julie, who hails from Smethwick, will help raise awareness of the charity's lifesaving work in its 25th anniversary year.

She will join a host of stars from the worlds of sport and entertainment who have agreed to become ambassadors, including the likes of former Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond, former F1 racing drivers David Coulthard and Nigel Mansell and Harry Potter actor James Phelps.

Julie has a particular affinity to the lifesaving work of the charity, not only is she from the Midlands, but before her glittering career as an actress she was a nurse at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth hospital. Julie has won two Bafta Film awards and four Bafta TV awards, as well as a Bafta Fellowship in 2014.

She said: "I am absolutely delighted to support and help raise awareness of the lifesaving work of the Midlands Air Ambulance charity in its 25th anniversary year as part of #AIR25."

TRAFFIC

Cameras ensnare 10,000 motorists

ALMOST 10,000 drivers were snared by average speed cameras in just five months during a major roadworks scheme on the M6.

Cameras were switched on as the speed limit on the stretch heading south between junctions seven and eight was cut to 40mph – but thousands of drivers chose to ignore the restricted limit and were left facing fines.

Lanes were narrowed and the speed limit brought down between Great Barr and the M5.

The limit was slashed as a safety precaution as vehicles were guided across the carriageway by yellow markers, travelling much closer together than normal.

TRANSPORT

Airport set for a Christmas rush

ABOUT half a million passengers are expected to take flights from Birmingham Airport as they travel to a variety of destinations over the busy Christmas period from the popular transport hub.

This comes hot on the heels of another record-breaking month for the West Midlands gateway.

Nearly 780,000 passengers travelled through the airport in November, giving an increase of 12.5 per cent compared to the same month last year – equivalent to 86,550 more people.

COUNCIL

Register office to get a freshen-up

THE stamp of approval has been given by Sandwell Council's deputy leader, Syeda Khatun, to give the register office a fresh coat of paint.

Councillor Khatun joined staff at Grade II-listed Highfields House to see first-hand how the make-over is turning the building from pink to ivory. The building in West Bromwich High Street has been home to Sandwell's registrars since 1991.

Councillor Syeda Khatun said: "We felt it was time for a change. The new ivory colour will freshen the building up and complement the wonderful gardens for all those happy couples on their special day."

INSIDE

They seek him here ... and there

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Former pub scheme sparks planning row

Hadley Hall, in Smethwick

A PLANNING row has erupted over the former Barleycorn Pub in Smethwick, which is now a banqueting hall.

Developers have flouted planning regulations on the locally listed building by cladding the outside in aluminium – ignoring planning policy which told them to keep historic brickwork as it was.

The locally listed building building now known as Hadley Hall has a prominent position off Bearwood Road at the junction of Dawson Street. After the council's initial refusal for permission to convert the pub in 2010, the change of use went through on appeal.

An application to clad the building in aluminium panels was then refused by the council this August, but the work has begun anyway.

A further revised application for the cladding due this week, was also recommended to be denied.

In their report to the planning committee which met yesterday, Wednesday, the planning officer states: "The proposal does not respect the historic and architectural significance of the local listed building, in fact it has the reverse effect of causing substantial harm in that it materially alters the existing facades of the building from a brick construction and changes its appearance to industrial."

The report also adds: "The 20th Century Society has stated that the building's locally listed status reflects its significance as a fine exemplary of a modern public building in the style of EB Musman (many of his design being listed), and are the most lauded pubs of the interwar period." The planning officer also highlights that the applicant has not provided any written evidence that the fabric of the building is failing and cannot be repaired.

Watchdog says care firm needs to improve

A CARE service provider which looks after hundreds of older adults in their own homes has been to improve by the Care Quality Commission.

Inspectors found that staff at Tipton Home Care Limited failed to arrive at the homes of patients on a number of occasions – because staff were down to cover two shifts at once.

The care home, on Bloomfield Road, was criticised for the way the service is led. Inspectors also found issues with staff rotas and medicine records. It was rated by Care Quality Commission inspectors are 'requiring improvement' across the board – which covers safety, care and leadership.

The service provides care for adults of all ages including dementia patients, those with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Tipton Home Care provides care for 338 people in total who across the Black Country in Tipton, Wednesbury, West Bromwich, Yew Tree Walsall, Great Barr and Dudley.

Timely

The inspection report states: "The service was not well-led because people could not consistently contact the office by telephone on a timely basis when needed and did not receive support on a timely basis."

An inspector said: "Care staff were expected to be at two people's homes at the same time. We found evidence of this on all the care staff rotas we looked at. This would therefore result in care staff rushing or being late to their next call as travelling time was not being accounted for within their rotas."

Officers were told that this was not the case but evidence was found on care staff rotas leading to a breach of regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Medicine records have also been criticised due to a number of unexplained gaps where it was unclear as to whether medicines had been given. Officers from the CQC found that the records didn't have identified dates as to when the amount and times medicines should be given. Officers provided the service 48 hours notice due to the manager often being out of the office.

The care firm declined to comment.

Dashing through the park – Santas

Red and white abounds as hundreds take part in the big Santa Dash around Sandwell Valley Park

A TIDE of Father Christmases descended on a Black Country's beauty spot as a Santa Dash attracted 700 participants.

The Sandwell Valley Country Park event is only in its second year but proved a huge hit.

It attracted all types from keen runners to those seeking a bit of fresh air.

The rain clouds failed to ruin the fun for those walking, jogging or running around Swan Pool.

Cathy Ferriday, one of the organisers at Mytime Active, said: "It was incredible to see so many people from families to those with dogs to others with children.

"From what I could tell everyone had a really good time." Mytime Active has organised the event, supported by Sandwell Leisure Trust and Sandwell Council, as a fun way for residents of all ages to get active and enjoy themselves at Christmas.

For £5 participants who signed up had the choice of walk, jogging, or gently strolling the 2km route.

The event started with a mass Christmas-themed warm-up before the dash got underway around 11am on Saturday.

Lisa Newey, 44, from Tipton, took part with her mother, auntie and friends. She said: "It was brilliant. Even on the walk there it was surprising how many people stopped to say what are you doing and why are you dressed that way?

"The dash itself was great and really well organised."

Rupi Lal, 34, a presenter at Radio Sandwell who hosted the event, said it was 'amazing'.

Get on with Brexit, say MPs based in region

"GET on with it!" – that was the message from Black Country MPs who say it is time for the Government to push on with its Brexit plans. It comes after Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of Theresa May's plan to trigger Article 50 by the end of March 2017, following support for a Labour motion calling for scrutiny of her Brexit proposals.

Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson said the vote showed that the vast majority of MPs were committed to respecting the result of the EU referendum.

"At this stage it would be very difficult for the Government to show the full details of its plans, but it is quite reasonable to expect them to show the basic outline, such as how our businesses will trade in Europe, how workers' rights will be protected," he added.

The West Bromwich East MP said it was now time for the Government to 'press on' with its plans for Brexit.

"The most important thing is that we have now got to the position where MPs can debate the issues around our exit from the EU while still respecting the will of the people," he said. "That is the way our democracy should work."

Labour's Walsall North MP David Winnick, said: "It is time for them to get on with it. It has now been made perfectly clear that the Government must stick to its deadline on Article 50. There is now no excuse for it to be broken. I voted for it without hesitation, but as a party we were right to insist on the Government's plans being put to Parliament."

Cabbie jailed for teen attack

A TAXI driver who raped a teenager after picking her up from a night out has been jailed for 10 years.

Ihsanullah Sarfaraz, of Newmarket Way, in Hodge Hill, Birmingham, was hailed by his 18-year-old victim and a friend in Hurst Street, Birmingham. The 33-year-old dropped her friend at home but then drove the teenager to a secluded spot and subjected her to a horrendous attack.

Ihsanullah Sarfaraz

At court he admitted sexually assaulting the 18-year-old on October 23.

Inspector Ian Ingram, from the Public Protection Unit at West Midlands Police, said: "This was a total betrayal of trust; the teenager and her friend quite rightly thought they would be safe when they took a taxi home from a night out.

"He has now been put behind bars for a very long time, he will be placed on the sex offender register for life. I would also like to take the opportunity to commend this woman's bravery for coming forward and throughout this investigation.

"I hope today's sentence will bring her some comfort as she continues to recover from her ordeal."

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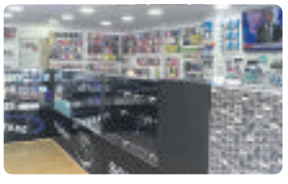

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People are taking the train more frequently

THE number of people catching trains across the Black Country and Staffordshire has increased by nearly seven per cent in the last year, new figures reveal. There were 20.375 million 'entries and exits' at stations across the region in 2015/16, up from 19.081 million the year before.

Of the region's 33 train stations, just three saw their overall visitors decline during that time. According to the estimates of the usage by the Office of Rail and Road, Cannock station was visited by 221,124 people in 2014/15 but a total of 220,290 travellers over the last year.

Cannock could benefit from £76m work which will see electrification of the Chase Line, which runs from Rugeley to Walsall. That should be completed by December 2017.

Meanwhile Wolverhampton railway station, which is operated by Virgin Trains, saw 4.746m visitors in 2015/16 – an increase of 5.6 per cent from 2014/15's total of 4.495m. Dudley's busiest station, Stourbridge Junction, saw an increase to 1.434m. It rose from 1.323m and showed an 8.3 per cent rise.

Rowley Regis, which was the busiest in Sandwell, was used by 1.015m passengers after 921,116 people used it in 2014/15. People using Walsall rose to 1.404m from 1.303m in 2014/15 – a 7.7 per cent increase.

Steve Wright from independent campaign group Railfuture said: "We are very enthusiastic about rail in the West Midlands and it is generally accepted that it is growing more quickly than anywhere else in the country.

"We are looking forward to the next franchise. That may see some significant improvements in (journey) frequency."

Children Treasure tickets for show

GENEROUS businesses sponsored theatre tickets to allow deprived children to see Treasure Island.

Nearly 200 children aged seven to 16, from areas with particularly high deprivation will get the treat. The show is to be held at Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

The ticket sponsorship has been provided by Gateley, Catalyst Corporate Finance, Pinsent Masons, The Rigby Foundation and Gowling WLG.

The Rep's fundraising manager Rachel Cranny said: "We are extremely grateful to our Christmas sponsors for their support. The Rep believes that all children and young people should have the chance to experience live theatre. By partnering with local businesses we can give them exactly that.

"As a registered charity we rely on the positive and generous financial support of individuals and businesses."

The Christmas production of Treasure Island runs at the theatre until January 7.

'Feisty' Brum-born Nell dies at 107

Nell, with one of her birthday cards

ONE of Dudley's oldest residents who has lived through the First and Second World Wars and was just three when the Titanic sank has died at the age of 107.

Miss Ellen 'Nell' Cook died at Gower Gardens Care Home in Halesowen. Nell's family paid tribute to her as an 'extremely strong' and 'wonderful' lady.

She was born in Digbeth, Birmingham, on March 26, 1909, to parents Amelia and Arthur Cook. Nell, who had lived in Halesowen for the last 25 years, grew up in a back-to-back house in Birmingham and lived there with her mother, father, two brothers and three sisters. At the front of the building was a shop and the back was where the house was. "She lived with eight of her family in the house," said Nell's niece Dianne Hall, 69, from Halesowen. Her house was on Moseley Street.

Nell had outlived all her siblings, Dianne said. She had two nieces, two great-nephews, one great-great niece and one great-great-nephew.

She never married or had any children. "Nell used to class herself as an 'unclaimed treasure'," Dianne said.

"She put her longevity down to two spoonfuls of sugar in her tea and having plenty of salt on her food. She was extremely strong and fiesty."

Her funeral will be taking place at St Margarets Church, in Hasbury, tomorrow, Friday, at 1pm. Nell left school when was 12 and worked at a company in Birmingham called Blackham and Powell, where she made cardboard boxes. Nell retired when she was in her 60s but took up selling wool at Rackhams store in Birmingham for a time.

Emergency camp may be set up for travellers

A HOLDING site for travellers could be set up in Smethwick to help the council move illegal camps on faster.

The transit site for caravans could be in the Black Patch area, although sites in Tipton and Oldbury are also being considered.

The idea has been hatched after Sandwell Council saw a 20 per cent rise in traveller camps which has cost £250,000 this year alone in clean-up and legal bills.

It would mean the council could bring new police powers into force enabling it to move camps on within 24 hours like neighbouring Walsall Council. Sandwell was one of many to suffer repeated and an increased number of illegal encampments this year, which led to many councils looking again at their policies on travellers.

This included caravans frequently pulling up at Black Patch park, where Charlie Chaplin is famously reported to have been born into a gipsy community.

The council has also launched a crackdown on persistent fly-tipping in the Black Patch area, putting up fencing and installing CCTV.

Additional

A council report said: "The council is also required to consider identifying 'acceptable' temporary stopping places for those wishing to camp." It goes on to suggest the identified site, referring to 'the possible creation of a transit site within the Black Patch area'.

"Such a site would enable additional police powers to be brought into effect to move travellers on more quickly," it states.

Council cabinet members will now carry out a visit of the site.A transit site is a specifically built site, much like a permanent site, with hard standing, electric hook up and a bathroom, but those pitching there are not allowed to stay beyond a defined period, usually somewhere between 28 days and three months.

However nearby residents expressed concern at the move. Rob Wilkes, from Perrott Street, said: "It's not something I would want to see if I looked out my window. If there is no other alternative what can you do."

Azad Imran, also from Smethwick, said: "I hope they don't cause issues in the park because we don't want that. It could be worrying because who knows what would come next if we have this one site."

New life for Shane in 10st loss

Looking at an image of himself weighing 30 stones earlier this year, is Shane Bissell, of Wednesbury

SWAPPING sugary drinks for water, takeaways with healthy goodness and no exercise to almost daily exercise is one man's new lifestyle – resulting in him losing over 10 stone in five months.

Shane Bissell, of Wednesbury, aged 25. weighed over 30 stone but decided it was time to lose weight after being given the repetitive nudge from his nan and the birth of his son.

Since starting Slimming World in June, Shane has lost 10st6 and was nominated Mr Sleek by his fellow members at the Slimming World club in Stone Cross.

"My nan pushed me to lose weight by joining a weight club but I really didn't want to go but it's the best thing I've done. The first four weeks I joined were absolutely terrible, I found it really hard. In the first week I lost 11 pounds straight away. I started playing tennis with my friend Jake and we started going swimming a few times a week at Wednesbury leisure centre.

"My parents and my nan were really worried about my health but now its improved drastically, everything is on the rise really."

Shane is a scaffolder for Interserve and hopes to reach his goal weight of 18 stone.

He said: "I don't feel like I'm on a diet anymore and I don't feel like I'm just healthy eating. I was the

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drinks advice as medics kept busy

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service experienced a large increase in emergency calls over the weekend, with many alcohol-related.

Paramedic Peter Bowles said almost 3,500 calls were made to the service on Saturday by midnight.

And 600 calls were also made in next four hours up until 4am on Sunday. He asked the public to be careful when drinking this Christmas.

Mr Bowles tweeted: "Almost 3.5k calls to @OFFICIALWMAS by midnight & 600 by 4am! #CCTU felt the pressure but got stuck in. #knowyourlimit."

"We would ask you this Christmas please, don't have one (drink) that is one too many.

"Look after your friends. Have water, and alternate drinks between water and have some food before you go out as well. And enjoy yourselves this Christmas period."

Man is killed in hit-and-run

A PEDESTRIAN was killed in a hit-and-run crash outside a West Midlands greyhound racing stadium. The man was struck by a van outside the Perry Barr Greyhound Racing Stadium in Aldridge Road, Birmingham.

The driver of the van ran off. Police are appealing for the driver of the white Transit-style van to come forward. The incident happened at 6.25am on Saturday. The victim has not been named yet but his family have been informed and are being supported by specially trained officers.

Sgt Alan Wood, from the collision investigation unit, said: "I would appeal for the driver or anyone who knows who it might be, to do the right thing and call us on 101."

Sex assault arrest is made

A SCHOOLBOY aged 16 was sexually assaulted in a van after being offered a lift by the driver. Police said the boy was approached in Kent Street, Birmingham, on November 30, and was then driven to a nearby location and assaulted.

A 55-year-old man was arrested over the weekend following a CCTV appeal which included pictures of the van. West Midlands Police said he was being questioned on suspicion of kidnap and serious sexual assault. Officers have also recovered a silver van which is being forensically examined.

Pop legends all set to Squeeze in city gig

VETERAN pop group Squeeze begin their Join The Dots UK tour next year in Birmingham. The band, which is working on a new album, will be supported by top rhythm and blues group Nine Below Zero.

Tickets are on sale for the concerts including the show in Symphony Hall on October 7. The bans are famous for hit songs including 'Cool for Cats and 'Tempted'.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

WEATHER-forecasting terms. Remind me again. Are dribs and drabs wetter than spits and spots?

THE Government's £10 Christmas bonus arrived in 1.2 million bank accounts this week. If this piffling handout, unchanged since 1972, were scrapped I bet 99 per cent of recipients would not even notice. Yet it would free up tens of millions of pounds which could be spent on nurses and carers for those who really need help. All it takes is political will.

DID you begin losing the will to live as you followed the Supreme Court hearing into Brexit? That's how it is with lawyers. I've covered hundreds of court cases and heard many barristers and judges doing their stuff. You get the impression they are paid by the word. There are honourable exceptions but, as a rule, lawyers simply adore delivering long, intricate screeds punctuated with many sub-clauses and endless references to obscure precedents. There were times, as the dissection of Brexit plumbed depths of mind-screaming intricacy, when the nation would have gladly settled for the judges deciding the future of Brexit by electing one of their number to toss a coin. Heads, we're out.

BANK of England governor Mark Carney says millions of jobs could be lost as a result of automation and robots. This news is greeted as a nightmare. Which is odd because the last time it came around, it was regarded as a dream. In the 1930s, automation promised an end to mankind's drudgery. Columnist, Phil Hickman, once told me the dream of the pre-war years was that people would have to work only a few hours per week "and we'd spend the rest of our time writing poetry and making mandolins and suchlike." It never happened. The Second World War came along and kept everybody busy for six years. The following decades were spent recovering. Today the prospect of jobs being taken by machines fills us with dread. But why? I bet the answer is that the jobs we do today, mostly in warm, clean offices, are far removed from the dirty, back-breaking labour of yore. Work gives us status and colleagues. We don't want it to end. If the age of the robots is coming, we will have to make them our servants, not our masters, and find new ways of keeping ourselves occupied. Anybody want a mandolin?

THIS is hardly a scientific survey but our local corner shop sold 40 books of stamps in a single day, which is apparently outstanding even for the time of year. Could it be that Christmas cards are regaining lost ground? Surely it was only a matter of time before people realised that a multiple-address Xmas email doesn't really hit the spot.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Doosan Babcock to lose 25 staff

ENGINEERING group Doosan Babcock is to cut almost 500 jobs across its UK sites – including nearly a fifth of the workforce at its site in Tipton.

The company, which employs around 3,800 people across the UK, said the bulk of the positions affected are in management, back-office support services and at the machining and assembly facility in Renfrew, Scotland, which is to close.

But it has also hit its Birmingham New Road facility in Tipton, which is the company's major apprentice training site with up to 100 trainees working there on an average day. Doosan is cutting 25 jobs from the 130-strong workforce at Tipton.

The site is also home to the largest welding school of its kind in the UK, but a Doosan spokesman said the training centre would not be affected by the job cuts. Instead they will come from other departments at the Tipton site, which include procurement, logistics, resource management and support services for Doosan Babcock's 60 other sites.

A total of 470 jobs are at risk in the current round of job cuts and a consultation has started with affected staff. Doosan said 800 people are employed at its Renfrew site with 270 of the workforce to be involved in the consultation process.

Other Doosan UK sites are in Newcastle, Cumbria, Yorkshire, Bristol and Crawley.

Doosan, which provides services to the energy, pharmaceutical and petrochemical sectors, said it foresees a "long-term downturn in certain market sectors which mean the current position is unsustainable".

Group which helps blind faces £35k cut

Report by Judith Hawkins

A GROUP which supports 1,300 blind and visually impaired people in Sandwell is facing a potential cut of £35,000 in council funding, as the cash-strapped authority looks to make savings.

Options presented to Sandwell Visually Impaired (SVI) in a consultation document from the council include cutting the funding over a period of time, which has been described by the group's chair Tony Averis as 'a nail in the coffin now or a nail in the coffin later'.

The consultation has raised concerns among the disabled community, including for well-known fundraiser 'Blind Dave' Heeley, who said the potential loss of this support would leave people as 'prisoners in their own homes'.

Also being reviewed is the future funding for Sandwell Deaf Community Association (SDCA).

Mr Averis says the organisation, which currently operates from very small premises on Dagger Lane, were pleased to have been offered larger accommodation in West Bromwich Town Hall by the council.

However this offer has now come with the news that the council is reviewing whether they can continue the same level of funding.

"It's like they are giving with one hand and then slapping us down with the other," he added.

'Blind Dave' Heeley said: "I'm a member of Sandwell Visually Impaired, and I know that they provide a lot of information that helps people. Without this they are prisoners in their own homes."

Councillor Ann Shackleton, cabinet member for social care, said: "As we try to deal with the biggest budget cuts in our history, we are seeking views on the proposals for future funding arrangements. We will welcome feedback from anyone with an interest in SDCA and SVI."

People have until December 19 to take part in the consultation process at www.sandwell.gov.uk/consultations

Flower power thanks to crocuses

Hady, Huda, Harun and Layla plant bulbs at the West Bromwich church grounds

A COUNCIL estate in West Bromwich is to be blooming lovely following the planting of 5,000 crocuses.

Lyng Community Association teamed up with West Bromwich Rotary and green-fingered residents to plant crocuses in the flowerbed at Turks Head Lane Park and around the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

Plants were also given to local residents to put in their front gardens and hanging baskets to create a sea of purple across the Lyng estate.

West Bromwich Rotary generously donated the crocuses as part of Rotary International's nationwide Purple4Polio initiative which is helping to rid the world of polio.

Local Rotary clubs are working with the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom community groups, such as the Lyng Community Association, to brighten up local communities and transform public spaces by planting crocuses.

More than six million purple crocuses are being planted across the country as purple represents the colour of dye which is placed on the little finger of a child on mass immunisation days.

Rachel Jennings, the LCA's community development officer, said: "We were pleased to support the campaign which will really help to brighten the estate."

Bill Elliott, immediate past president of West Bromwich Rotary, said the project will have a lasting effect. "We're planning to become more involved with LCA and to support its gardening club."

Facilities improve at GP practice in revamp

A LOCAL GP practice has been revitalised with a new modern revamp of their buildings meaning they can offer improved access and facilities to patients.

The practice

Lodge Road Surgery, in Smethwick, advised by NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), has been working over the past year on the improvements.

The new modern, light and airy feel to the practice has not only improved the environment for patients, but also allowed the number of appointments available to rise, as the renovations saw the old waiting area turned into several additional consulting rooms.

Dr Raminder Sawhney, a GP from Lodge Road Surgery, said "Our practice is delighted with the improvements that have been made to the building which will ultimately benefit both patients and our staff.

External

'We have been able to extend the building and provide more treatment rooms, a light and modern waiting area for our patients as well as provide suitable office accommodation for our admin team."

Dr Viney K Jhanjee and Partners applied for a grant from NHS England to part fund the improvements to the buildings. This has meant the surgery has been able to not only modernise the external structures but also build in features such as a server room for the computer systems.

Prof Nick Harding OBE, Chair of NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, said, "We are continually looking for ways in which we can support our member practices to improve access for patients in the local area."

Lodge Road Surgery has also improved facilities for its staff as well as the patients. The work on the practice was fully completed on Monday November 28. The Surgery is open Monday – Friday, between 8am and 6.30pm.

Matches ban for Aston Villa yob

A VILLA fan who launched himself at visiting Baggies fans during the trouble-hit game between the clubs has been banned from seeing matches for three years.

West Midlands Police has secured a Football Banning Order against Gary Tucker, aged 27, for his involvement in disorder which dated back to 2010.

This included the cup game on March 7 last year.

The order was secured at Birmingham Magistrates Court and Tucker was also ordered to pay £2,000 costs.

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People are taking the train more frequently

THE number of people catching trains across the Black Country and Staffordshire has increased by nearly seven per cent in the last year, new figures reveal.

There were 20.375 million 'entries and exits' at stations across the region in 2015/16, up from 19.081 million the year before.

Of the region's 33 train stations, just three saw their overall visitors decline during that time. According to the estimates of the usage by the Office of Rail and Road, Cannock station was visited by 221,124 people in 2014/15 but a total of 220,290 travellers over the last year.

Cannock could benefit from £76m work which will see electrification of the Chase Line, which runs from Rugeley to Walsall.Meanwhile Wolverhampton railway station, which is operated by Virgin Trains, saw 4.746m visitors in 2015/16 – an increase of 5.6 per cent from 2014/15's total of 4.495m. Dudley's busiest station, Stourbridge Junction, saw an increase to 1.434m. It rose from 1.323m and showed an 8.3 per cent rise.

Rowley Regis, which was the busiest in Sandwell, was used by 1.015m passengers after 921,116 people used it in 2014/15. People using Walsall rose to 1.404m from 1.303m in 2014/15 – a 7.7 per cent increase.

Steve Wright from independent campaign group Railfuture said: "We are very enthusiastic about rail in the West Midlands and it is generally accepted that it is growing more quickly than anywhere else in the country."

Help at hand for paying water bills

HARD-UP families in the Black Country could get financial help to pay their water bills over Christmas and the New Year.

The Severn Trent Trust Fund (STTF) is running its Big Difference Scheme to help those struggling to pay water bills by saving an average of £250 per customer.

The scheme, offered by Severn Trent Water and STTF, aims to help people during the festive period when they are in danger of letting debt get out of control and start with a clean slate in 2017. Kim Wootton, operations director at STTF, said: "With continuing economic uncertainty, higher prices in the shops and the cost of Christmas looming, people will be struggling to pay all of their bills."

Rag 'n' Bone Man set for city date

BRITISH blues singer-songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man is to perform in Birmingham after his debut album is released early in the new year.

He will be at the O2 Institute in Digbeth on April 24.

Video's virtual stroll through hospital

A view of the hospital's reception area

A NEW video has revealed how the inside of the Midland Metropolitan Hospital will look when the £350 million building opens its doors to patients.

The video also includes interviews with those involved in the 'super hospital', set to open in Smethwick in 2018. It pans through artist's impressions of the site, including the emergency department reception and the main entrance.

Speaking in the video, Dr Sarb Clare, lead clinician and consultant in acute medicine, said: "It's the culmination of over 10 years of hard work by our management and our clinicians. Together we're bringing two acute sites, Sandwell Hospital and City, where if you are acutely unwell you will be seen by some of the best doctors in the world. The beauty of this place is that you will be seen seven days a week."

The new hospital will have 670 beds and 15 operation theatres, as well as brand-new diagnostic equipment. Its A&E will replace emergency care facilities at City Hospital, while Sandwell's General's A&E will become an urgent care centre. Dr Clare added: "Midland Met will be a real leader on how healthcare should be run, and will set the pace and be a real example to the rest of the United Kingdom."

The hospital is being delivered through a Public Private Partnership under a 30-year concession contract.

Also on the latest video is Raffaela Goodby, director of organisation development at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, who highlighted how the hospital will result in the creation of more homes and jobs.

Aldi in revised plans hope for town store

ALDI have resubmitted revised plans for a new store off Queslett Road in Great Barr, after their previous proposals were heavily criticised.

The supermarket chain decided to withdraw its application for the 1,140 sq m store in Great Barr, which were set to be rejected by planners after being described in the officer's report as a 'visually poor development' and concern over its impact on surrounding roads.

Now a new application has been submitted for the same site, with several amendments the applicants hope will address the issues raised by Birmingham City Council planners.

In their new design and access statement the developers state: "The revised application addresses the comments received from the previous application and provides further justification for the store."

They continue: "The City Highways team has stated that it will not allow access to the store from Queslett Road due to the likely adverse impact on traffic movements and in terms of highway safety.

Flourish

"Therefore access can only be obtained from Old Horns Crescent and specifically at the location shown on the application drawings to accord with Highway design criteria.

"Creating a suitably level development platform requires the use of a retaining structure on Queslett Road frontage. However, this can be achieved using a system that allows green plants to grow and flourish, creating a more subtle street scene.

"The scale of the retaining wall has been reduced from the previous scheme and this has enabled the creation of a substantial landscaped area."

The previous application was also criticised for the level of compensation being provided to the nearby Queslett Nature Reserve, which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

In their new plans they state that Aldi and their design team have met with the Friends of Queslett Nature Reserve to discuss the opportunity of providing enhancements, which are itemised in the plans including bat boxes, hedgehog habitats, information boards and log seating.

Discrimination fears from Sikhs

Sandwell Councillor Preet Gill, at the council house, with the survey on Sikhs that has been published

A NATIONAL survey of 4,500 Sikhs shows one in five have experienced discrimination and one in nine feel parliament fails to effectively represent them.

Sandwell Councillor Preet Gill had a key role in organising and distributing the questionnaire.

The cabinet member for public health and protection in Sandwell has worked with The Sikh Network on the survey which is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind. The poll, managed by the network, questioned 4,500 Sikhs in the UK, conducted online in written questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

Councillor Gill said: "I wanted to get involved with the survey as it's really important we capture what people's experiences are.

"Sandwell has a real diverse community in my ward, St Paul's, including a high Sikh population and the figures are quite shocking. In Sandwell we're making sure that our third party racial abuse reporting centres are the right ones and staff are trained to properly. There's also not a single Sikh member of parliament or House of Lords therefore the community don't feel engaged with parliament and politics."

The survey also found that two-thirds of Sikhs were born in Britain and nine out of 10 describe their nationality as British.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jessica to present festive concerts

COMEDY actress Jessica Hynes will be the presenter for four Christmas concerts by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

The CBSO is performing in Symphony Hall on December 16, 18 and 19. There are performances at 7.30pm each day and a 3pm matinee on the Sunday as well. The concerts also feature the CBSO Choruses and will feature seasonal music old and new including many carols. Tickets can be booked on 0121 780 3333.

Jessica is best known for her TV work on Spaced and Twenty Twelve.

Adding up for finding talent

SCHOOLS from across a Black Country town battled it out in a mathematics contest. The semi-final of the National Young Mathematicians' Awards took place at an Explore Learning centre in Oldbury.

The annual event, organised by tuition provider, Explore Learning, and the NRICH Project at the University of Cambridge, aims to challenge the country's brightest young students.

Around 500 schools took part in the first round. Adam Tindle, of Explore Learning Oldbury said: "It was an absolutely fantastic day."

Scout in abuse had Villa links

ASTON Villa is the latest club to be part of an investigation in the sex abuse in football inquiry. The club has links to a former scout who was jailed for abusing boys in the 70s and 80s.

Ted Langford, who has since died, was jailed for three years in 2007 for abusing four young players. He is said to have managed a feeder club.

In a statement Aston Villa said: "The club co-operated fully with the authorities during the investigation at that time."

Little Mix reveal extra Brum gig

LITTLE Mix have announced an extra Birmingham date for their forthcoming 2017 tour.

The girl group is to perform at at Birmingham's Genting Arena next October as part of their Glory Days tour.

The new date, October 13, will mean that the girls will take to the stage four times in the city with dates for an October 17 evening show and October 18 for a matinee and evening show already announced.

Solo Boden at hall

THE former lead singer of folk group Bellowhead is playing in Birmingham on a solo tour in the new year.

Jon Boden, who also plays the fiddle, will appear at Birmingham Town Hall on May 14 on his Painted Lady tour, which marks the 10th year re-issue of his solo album, with tickets £23.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Puncture? It wheely should not be so hard

I SUPPOSE it was inevitable, following last week's rant about the disruption caused by pothole repairs, that I would immediately come a cropper by driving over one.

So it came as no surprise that two days later I had a puncture caused by a big pothole in a country lane just around the corner from the roadworks in Seisdon I had been complaining about.

Changing a wheel in the pitch black and driving rain is never pleasant, and it did feel as if this normally quiet road suddenly became a magnet for most of the traffic in Staffordshire.

And why do modern car manufacturers make everything so complicated? At home, I have got a 40-year-old car, with the spare wheel held in place by a nut and bolt. However, in the new car, the spare is held in place by some crane–like contraption featuring a spring-loaded cable and a set of instructions resembling Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Was there really anything wrong with a nut and bolt? If it is a struggle for me, how hard must it be for a distressed old-age pensioner?

And then we come to the wheel-brace. Again, in the not-too-distant past, a wheel-brace was a simple bar with a spanner on the end. Then there are the telescopic ones, which give you a bit more leverage, and that is fine. But this is the first time I have ever seen a self-assembly wheel-brace, in two parts, with yet more unintelligible instructions. Doesn't it say something about the modern world when even a wheel-brace needs assembly instructions?

While struggling to work all this out, a very nice chap called Steve Beard stopped to help. He too was bamboozled by the spare wheel crane, but after a lot of patient studying, he worked it out and the spare was liberated.

The experience taught me a lot about my fellow road users; some also offered to help, others impatiently tweaked their horns. One even complained that Steve's headlights were too bright.

It also taught me that in the quest for ever-greater sophistication, sometimes we solve a problem that never actually existed in the first place.

❒❒❒

WHILE I love to hear from readers, it was with great sadness that I read the letter from a gentleman in Stourbridge whose wife had her purse stolen at the check-out of a well-known retailer.

He points out that the thief was clearly caught on CCTV, but nobody was monitoring it.

I can only say that it is very sad that such things go on in our community, and I hope the footage was handed over to police. And if the police are unable to identify the offender, please email me a picture. I'm sure one of our readers might be able to help.

Arun Barua, aged four, gets an early gift at Old Square, Walsall

Santa at Birches Valley Forest Centre, on Cannock Chase

Sleigh boat to China? Well not quite, it's Dudley Caverns

You'd better watch out, Santa's in town

As the momentum gathers for the big Christmas Countdown, **TOM OAKLEY** looks at where we'll find Santa this year

HO! HO! HO! The countdown to Christmas has started which means Father Christmas is busy getting gifts ready for all the boys and girls on his 'nice' list.

Despite this, Santa always makes time in his busy schedule to visit these same children.

You know how the song goes: He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake...

And thankfully he's also conveniently located his grottos across the West Midlands this festive season, so there are plenty of opportunities for you to see the man himself.

In the Black Country, the Dudley Caverns offer something a bit different with their grotto underground. Children are invited to travel by boat along an illuminated journey to see Santa and his elves. There will be carols, hot drinks, mince pies and seasonal entertainment. For details visit www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk.

Ranging

Elsewhere in the town, families are invited to visit Santa in his grotto set within the Dudley Zoological Gardens. It is open every day up to Christmas from 10am until 3.30pm with prices ranging from £4.50 for children's tickets to £8 for adults.

The Black Country Living Museum is hosting Santa hunts. In Stourbridge, the Bonded Warehouse is offering a boat ride down the canal before visiting Santa's Grotto in the warehouse.

Trips will run on December 17, 18 and 22, with tickets available to book by contacting Heidi Barratt on 01384 395216.

With an allocated time slot to see Santa at the West Midlands Safari Park, you will be greeted by one of his helpful Elves who will show you to the sleigh where you will be magically transported to the North Pole.

The Bonded Warehouse is all set for their Santa boat trips. Pictured as Santa is David Caunt

While Santa's Grotto is a decorated log cabin with it's own Christmas tree, festive fireplace and of course a seat next to Santa himself. It is open everyday up to and including Christmas Eve, with tickets ranging from £5 to £21.

More information is available by visiting www.wmsp.co.uk/santa-safari/

At Sandwell Park Farm you can visit Santa in his grotto, receive a gift and write him a letter as part of Sandwell Council's Christmas in the Valley celebrations.

You will also be given the chance to meet his reindeers and other animals at the farm.

Christmas in the Valley runs until December 24 with extra activities scheduled for weekends.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for leisure Councillor Richard Marshall said: "This is our first Christmas at the Valley event and we want to make it a great one for kids and families."

Book online at www.sandwell.gov.uk.

In West Bromwich, a grotto will be at New Square Shopping Centre until Christmas Eve. Entry to the grotto is £5 including a gift from Father Christmas.

Old Square Shopping Centre in Walsall also has a grotto open until Christmas Eve. Opening times are subject to change and residents are asked to keep an eye on the centre's Facebook page.

Continuing his tour of the West Midlands, Santa will also visit Cadbury World to spread chocolate, gifts and Christmas cheer.

The chocolatiers will be working as hard as elves to create a Christmas chocolate masterpiece – last year they made a 3.5ft chocolate Santa.

Visit cadburyworld.co.uk/whats-on/winter for more information on dates and times.

Christmas chocolates at Cadbury World

Visitng Santa at West Midland Safari Park

While he is in Birmingham Santa will also visit the grotto at the Bullring Shopping Centre.

In Staffordshire, people are being urged to bring their family along to Santa's Grotto at Birches Valley.

The Grotto is housed in a beautiful log cabin and set in the picturesque surroundings of Cannock Chase.

Santa's real reindeer can be found close by, grazing in their forest enclosure.

All children who visit Santa will receive their very own real Christmas tree sapling to take home and plant, plus a small gift.

Tickets cost £10 per child and adults have free entry to the Grotto with a paying child.

Children under one-year-old with a paying sibling can go in for free as long as they don't want a gift.

The grotto is open this weekend and next but is closed during the week.

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

May not Remaining true to vote result

I HAVE always had doubts about the PM's promise to get us out of the EU, especially when you consider she was one of the Remain supporters and now has around 75 per cent of Cabinet members supporting the Remainers.

Also we have David Davis, whose sole task is to get the UK out of the EU saying that the UK may consider continuing paying the EU billions just to stay in the single market. To compound the backsliding, he is in favour of still allowing migrant workers into the UK. What a turnaround, and what a slap in the face for all who voted to get us a clean break from the EU.

Another Remainer, the chancellor, says that we may have to make more compromises to be rid of the EU membership. The level of trust for 17,400,000 people, in May, is now at zero. She had many opportunities to get Article 50 in place, but has continually stalled and now we are embroiled in, and dependent on, judges deciding our fate.

So much for democracy!

R SAUNDERS
Walsall

Passenger bag return thank you

ON Tuesday, November 29, I boarded the 89 bus which was travelling from Cape Hill.

When I got off in Londonderry Lane, because I had a lot of shopping bags, I didn't notice I'd left my handbag on the bus.

I couldn't get into my home as everything, phone, cards, purse, keys, were in the bag.

A neighbour rang the West Midlands depot, they contacted the driver who said it had been handed to him.

Whoever it was, I can't thank them enough for being so honest to do this.

It's not often you meet such kindness and courtesy these days.

Once again can I offer my heartfelt thanks to the depot for being so helpful, but especially to the decent, honest person who found my bag.

From a grateful OAP, thank you.

MRS JEAN JUKES
Milton Road
Smethwick

Art always in firing line when cuts come

I HAVE been following the story regarding the funding cuts that appear to be imminent concerning the New Gallery in Walsall.

I am always surprised that the powers-that-be feel that the arts have little bearing on our lives. When therefore belts have to be tightened, the arts in all its form is first in the firing line.

It would be interesting to ask people how much influence some form of art has had during their lifetime. Words placed in a certain way within the context of a narrative can be life affirming. Music, sounds of voices singing together bring grown men to tears. The sight of young children having their first encounter with pieces of sculpture, great canvasses of paint or collage opens new doors.

Art creates debate. In a world where interaction exists on social media, Skyped images or in languages created by text and e-mail (somewhat ironic as this has been sent by e-mail) we need to be able to look, see, feel touch, smell and comment and debate our experiences.

Taking away the spaces where the public can engage and make judgements of works seems to me like shutting the door on something that is part of our culture part of how we perceive the world by seeing, hearing and touching how others see it.

DR B DAKIN
Tividale

Freedom of Press plea

WOULD you kindly print this letter regarding the appeal in the Press over Section 40 of the Crime Courts Act 2013. I duly went online to voice my concerns, the following is a brief outline.

We are in a minority, as a nation, regarding freedom of the press, we must insure that the journalists can print the truth whether it's political or not.

They must have no restrictions on their reporting. The state should have not any intrusions; the journalists must print without intimidation or threats of imprisonment. Politicians and so-called celebrities must not be allowed to gag the Press. I will defend the rights of any man or woman to have their say. We have as a nation shown the world about freedom of speech and justice, we must not lose these values.

MR R F GOODHALL
Wordsley

FA's concerns not for victims

I LISTENED with horror at the allegations coming out of football, but even more abhorrent were the FA's fears of financial repercussions rather than for the well-being of victims.

It seems lessons still haven't been learnt, we've seen the same denial in the Jimmy Savile scandal, and it took years for the truth to come out, and once again the victims were denied their day in court by the establishment putting their financial interests first.

The nagging question is where are our children safe?

S T VAUGHAN
Yardley Wood

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Council drives ahead with Safer 6 project at Oldbury

THE results are in for the Safer 6 campaign's fifth week, which had a special focus on Oldbury.

Tackling speeding, cleaning up grot spots and promoting safety and crime prevention were among the week's key activities.

The council, fire service and police, together with councillors, health and probation services and community and voluntary groups, all support the six-week Safer 6 campaign.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Susan Downing, Oldbury town lead member Councillor Suzanne Hartwell and cabinet member Councillor Steve Trow officially launched the week's activities at an information roadshow in Oldbury Civic Square. Lots of services were there, including the fire service, police and the council's Youth Bus.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Susan Downing with the Safer 6 team in Oldbury, in front of the council's Youth Bus at Civic Square

Speed watch operation in Grafton Road

Tobacco

Trading standards officers brought along the tobacco education unit and a sniffer dog to raise awareness of illegal and counterfeit alcohol and cigarettes.

Volunteers from Sandwell Crime Prevention Panel gave out 110 home security packs, 26 cycle marking kits, 47 mobile phone security packs and 160 door cards.

Key activities during Week Five included police, neighbourhood officers and local councillors who held speed watches in all four wards – Bristnall, Langley, Oldbury and Old Warley. Broken down, the areas covered included Kingsway, Tame Road and Grafton Road where they checked 304 vehicles, of which 21 were speeding. Police sent warning letters to these motorists. Meanwhile, council property intervention officers visited 36 empty private homes, to check they were secure and continue looking at ways to get them back into use.

Fire crews carried out 60 'Safe & Well' visits, offering fire and road safety advice, checking whether people had smoke detectors and promoting health and well-being. They also talked to customers at Asda about chimney safety.

Fire crews held a car safety event at Oldbury Fire Station, advising on oil and water, tyre safety and children's car seats. Police held an advice surgery at Londis, Langley, and a safer travel operation in Oldbury town centre; and, together with trading standards officers, carried out checks on traders in vans. Offenders doing unpaid Community Payback worked with the council's estates team to clear more than 2.5 tons of rubbish and debris from overgrown and rubbish-strewn sites in Blakeley Hall Road, Beeches Road and Birmingham Road.

Council neighbourhood officers, councillors and Tipton Litter Watch held a litter pick in the Holcroft Street area, collecting 17 bags of litter. Neighbourhood officers and the DECCA (drug education, counselling and confidential advice) team ran sessions for young people about drugs and alcohol at Bleakhouse and Oldbury libraries.

Neighbourhood officers worked with the Friends of Tividale Park and Tividale Gurdwara Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji to install bat and bird boxes on trees.

Partners visited Whiteheath Medical Centre to raise awareness of domestic violence and help available, and neighbourhood services, IRiS and Sandwell Women's Aid promoted a range of services at Alfred Gunn House, Harry Price House and Hackwood House.

Council officers gave advice and distributed leaflets about scams and rogue traders to tenants in Lancaster House and held a crime prevention surgery at the Queensridge Court extra care housing scheme.

Neighbourhood services and anti-social behaviour team officers held walkabouts and door-knocking across the town. Also during the week, the council started work in Oldacre Road to create a parking area for residents.

Public health and protection chief, Councillor Preet Gill, said: "It's great to see lots of different organisations working together to respond to issues."

Megan helps hospital hit milestone for project

AN 18-year-old from Quarry Bank has become the 1,000th patient recruited at Birmingham Children's Hospital to a project that is looking to transform the diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases and cancer.

1,000th patient

The recruitment of Megan Wood to the 100,000 Genomes Project signalled the milestone for the dedicated team.

The national initiative – the first of its type in the world – is working to decode complete sets of genetic information to help scientists and doctors understand more about specific conditions.

Megan has been cared for by the hospital since she was two, when she was diagnosed with systemic onset juvenile idiopathic arthritis and, later, interstitial lung disease. She hopes the project could help with more targeted and personalised treatment.

The Halesowen College student explained: "It can be really frustrating at times because my condition can mean I can't do everyday things like my friends. I'm hoping that by taking part it might lead to more of an explanation on what causes the problems."

Since its launch in the summer of 2015 Birmingham Children's Hospital has been a supporter of the project that will make the UK the first country to introduce this technology into its mainstream health system.

The hospital is one of 18 NHS Trusts within the West Midlands Genomic Medicine Centre, collaborating to deliver the programme across the region. Further details can be found at www.westmidsgmc.nhs.uk

Sleigh laden at Haden as Santa in stop-off

SANTA cleared his busy schedule to stop off at Haden Hill House Museum's grotto.

Museum staff have been working with Cradley Heath Creative on a number of projects throughout the year including the grotto and many other activities.

Among Santa's special attractions, the community group has helped to set up a special tree which is located outside the museum, littered with handmade messages to loved ones that have died.

People of all ages gathered at the museum to write their personal heartfelt messages to those that are missed throughout the festive season.

Alison Hyatt, visitor services officer for Haden Hill house museum, said: "The Cradley Heath Creative came and hanged all of the 30 messages on the mulberry tree which sits right in front of the museum. It looks absolutely lovely and it's something very different to what we've been involved with before.

Catherine Melnik and Mike Shackleton, dressed up as Father Christmas

Reaction

"We seem to be getting the same reaction from a lot of our visitors as I'm sure it's an unusual thing to come across but also something that's lovely to read. The messages are all unique but most of them are wishing merry Christmas to people that are sadly no longer with us."

Cradley Heath Creative have worked on a number of different activities with the museum, at the end of November the group put on a tree dressing activity where people were invited to come along and decorate old lampshades with jewellery and beads.

The community group is committed to bringing arts and cultural events to Sandwell.

Visitors can look at the tree located outside the museum in Haden Hill park until the end of December.

Fatal injuries in tank blast

AN inquest has opened into a man who died after a tank exploded at his workplace causing him multiple injuries. Raymond Wyman, from Pensnett, was working ad-hoc at KTC Edibles Limited, in Heath Road, Wednesbury, when the incident happened on October 31. Mr Wyman had been working at the top of the four metre tank which used to be used by former site owners Caparo to store methanol in, Black Country Coroners Court heard. He had been using an oxy propane cutting torch and methanol was still inside the tank – causing a suspected ignition of the methanol and then an explosion.

Mr Wyman was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and passed away on November 8. Speaking at the inquest, DS Rob Bastin from West Midlands Police, said: "It was a large warehouse that used to be owned by Caparo. It then went into receivership and KTC Edibles Limited bought it in order to store food stuff. There was an explosion and believed ignition of methanol and the tank he was working on toppled over. Inquiries are on-going."

Amanda James, from the HSE construction division, said: "The tank did contain methanol.."

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique adjourned the inquest until January 31 and requested representatives for both companies to attend.

Changes to your Christmas bin collections

Your usual collection date	Christmas collection date
Monday 26 December	Tuesday 27 December
Tuesday 27 December	Wednesday 28 December
Wednesday 28 December	Thursday 29 December
Thursday 29 December	Friday 30 December
Friday 30 December	Saturday 31 December
Monday 2 January	Tuesday 3 January
Tuesday 3 January	Wednesday 4 January
Wednesday 4 January	Thursday 5 January
Thursday 5 January	Friday 6 January
Friday 6 January	Saturday 7 January

One day later than usual

The tip at Shidas Lane, Oldbury, is open 8am-4pm every day. The only days it will close are Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Garden waste collections are having a break for the winter. There will be no green bin collections from 5 December until 24 February.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/binday

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

serco

Collections will return to normal from Monday 9 January 2017

Carer John hits the heights to raise £1,000 for family of cancer victim

Roman Bajerowski, who died at 35

Justina Bajerowski and daughter Laura seen with carer John Howell as he presents a cheque for £1000 after his skydive

A KIND-HEARTED caregiver completed a thrilling skydive in memory of a much-loved colleague who passed away after a short battle with cancer.

John Howell, from Home Instead Senior Care Dudley, took on the adrenaline-fuelled challenge to raise more than £1000 to support the family of Roman Bajerowski.

Roman, who was a father of three, from Tividale, died in February after being diagnosed with lung cancer less than a year before.

Despite recovering from his initial diagnosis, later that year it came back along with skin and bone cancer.

Exhilarating

John was supported at Tilstock Airfield on September 2 by Ian and Julie Williams, owners of Home Instead Senior Care Dudley, as well as fellow caregivers.

After completing the Skydive John, he said: "I can honestly say it was the most exhilarating thing I have ever done and believe it or not, I'm already planning on doing another. Go try it yourselves, it really is magic." John handed the cheque over to the Bajerowski family last week and is continuing to collect in sponsor money from family, friends and work colleagues to support Roman's family.

Justina Bajerowski, who looks after their three children – Natalia, 12, Israel, eight and Laura, two – spoke of her love for Roman. She said: "We never gave up hope. He appeared to be doing well after recovering from his original diagnosis but then we discovered he had cancer on his spine. It was no age at all for us to lose him – he was only 35.

"He was such a wonderful person inside and out. When he fell ill I would go and give him a kiss every night and before he passed away he told me to tell the children that he loved them.

"He absolutely loved his job and the elderly people he visited loved him too as he was passionate about care and really helpful.

"Everyone at Home Instead has been amazing. They are so supportive to me they are like a second family and I'm so thankful for everything they have done for us."

Roman and Justina were originally from Poland, making to the move to the Midlands 11 years ago.

Julie Williams, owner of Home Instead, said: "Every one of our caregivers are chosen for their exceptional qualities. Kindness, compassion and a caring nature are qualities that are essential when supporting our clients and John has certainly demonstrated his exceptional qualities."

Fireflies Nursery – sparking off your youngster's potential

Commercial feature

Opening in January is a nursery which can really ignite your child's potential – Fireflies Nursery, which has spaces available for youngsters aged three months to five years.

Fireflies takes a whole child approach to childcare and their practitioners work together to meet all intellectual, social, emotional behavioural needs for each child individually.

We have a experienced management team that delivers outstanding care.

We are also still recruiting skilled people to join our team.

With the history of the renovated fire station, which is our base in Smethwick, the nursery has a wonderful history to keep alive and move forward into the future.

We offer a caring environment, healthy nutritional meals, structured educational play as well as free choice of play and learning activities, regular parent meetings to keep parents/carers informed.

We also have a large outdoor play area and the converted fire station also gives a large, brand new indoor facility with areas designated to babies, pre-school and also a fantastic sensory room.

Our open day is Saturday, December 17, from 10am to 3pm at Station House, 11A Barrett Street, B66 4SE so please come along and see Santa also meet the management team and have a look round to reserve your child's place as we open the doors in January 2017.

If you are interested in a place contact us 0121 565 2210 or email info@firefliesnursery.co.uk

Station House, the nursery's base in Barrett Street, Edgbaston

Part of the brand new indoor facility

A whole child approach to childcare

Sandwell Markets
Christmas Trading 2016

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Kings Square, West Bromwich -
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(including Christmas Eve) and
Sunday December 18th
Re-opens 28th December 2016

West Bromwich High St Market
- Open Monday to Saturday
(including Christmas Eve)
and Sunday 18th December
Re-opens 28th December 2016

Great Bridge Market,
Town Centre Car Park
Wednesdays and Saturdays

Wednesbury Market,
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(Bric a Brac),
Fridays/Saturdays (General Goods),

Oldbury Market,
Adjacent Sainsbury's
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All Markets are closed on
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plus 1st & 2nd January 2017.
For details of opening times,
contact the Markets Manager
on 0121 553 3074

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Brand new nursery is opening in a historical building in Smethwick

Fireflies Nursery
"Igniting your child's potential"

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Pilot and Titan explore strange new worlds in Respawn and EA's Titanfall 2 – and try to survive in them

Video game titans battle it out with action franchises

GAMERS have a better than ever choice of action games after the major companies surpassed themselves by literally unleashing their big guns in readiness for the season of goodwill – and console carnage – to all men (and women!).

Several of the top titles are sequels but, reversing the usual trend of diminishing returns, these games actually improve upon, or at least match, the originals.

Titanfall 2 is the follow-up to 2014's multi-award winner Titanfall and places you back in the thick of the action as a pilot in the galactic civil war between the Militia and the IMC. You can call upon a Titan, a hulking cross between a Transformers-like robot and a walking tank.

The single player campaign is shorter but more exciting than the original, with you as rookie pilot Jack, trapped behind enemy lines on a hostile alien planet after a mission goes badly wrong.

It is in multi-player that developers Respawn have really pulled out all the stops with strange new worlds, more powerful weapons and bigger, better Titans for when the robots get ready to rumble. The whole experience has been upgraded. The rocket-powered grappling hook is likely to be a favourite innovation, letting you soar through the sci-fi landscapes like Spiderman.

Why why why Aunt Delilah? The witch grabs the throne in Dishonored 2

Steampunk

Dishonored 2 takes fans of 2012 stealth hit Dishonored back to Dunwall and the Empire of the Isles. It's 15 years after the events of the original game and Empress Emily Kaldwin is now ruling with the help of her father Corvo Attano, Dishonored's hero. She is usurped by a witch-like aunt and you must then choose to play as Emma or Corvo for the rest of the game.

It's an action-packed sequel with new supernatural abilities to discover and use, set in a superbly realised pseudo-Victorian steampunk world. Is it better than the original? Maybe not, but it matches it for thrills and imagination. When a game was this popular, more of a good thing is welcome.

Battlefield 1 is actually a prequel, going back to the First World War to reboot the popular war game franchise. Most non-gamers probably think you have to suspend your maturity as soon as you press play on a Battlefield or Call Of Duty game. But, amid all the slaughter, Battlefield 1 actually has thoughtful moments. Just moments.

In the first scenes, when you wake up again and again in the trenches, overwhelmed by the Kaiser's hordes, the game drives home the message that many soldiers didn't stand a chance. One skirmish ends with you facing a lone German soldier, and both of you decide to drop your weapon. Point made, a huge world of war opens up with choices of campaign ranging from the Western Front, to dogfights in the skies, war in the Alps, the Gallipoli campaign or the chance to fight alongside Lawrence of Arabia in the desert. Multi-player can involve up to 64 combatants.

If you are a Batman fan, Warner Bros' Batman: Return To Arkham is a treat. It packages together remastered versions of Arkham Asylum and Arkham City.

The Bat's twisted gothic world has never looked better as he confronts his most dangerous enemies, The Joker, Harley Quinn, Killer Croc, The Penguin, Bane and Poison Ivy, plus the unpredictable Catwoman.

All these games are for older gamers and are available on a variety of platforms but were reviewed on Xbox One by Leon Burakowski.

A War Horse moment from Battlefield 1, the war game's reboot

The chokes on you Joker, says Batman, from Return To Arkham

Steve Melia, Deputy Mayor Susan Downing, Charles Hickman

Deputy Mayor Councillor Susan Downing chats to Charlie Valentine Hickman

Councillor Steve Melia chats to traders during a tour of the market

Birmingham singer-songwriter Spence Cater in performance

It's Christmas crackers for all the fun of the fair

SANDWELL'S first-ever mini continental-style festive market has opened in West Bromwich town centre and will be running for six days a week in the run-up to Christmas.

Sandwell Council market bosses have come up with something a little different for the town, and each day from Monday to Saturday there will be a variety of interesting stalls in the pedestrianised area of the High Street between Kings Square and Queens Square.

Visitors can also listen to a traditional fairground organ, which is providing music to add to the festive spirit, and ride a traditional Ferris wheel.

The organ and Ferris wheel are being run by the Jones family, who also run the Victorian funfair at the Black Country Living Museum.

Councillor Steve Melia, town lead member for West Bromwich, said: "It's great that the usual attractions of the busy shopping centre have been increased with a slice of continental-style foods, confectionery and other festive items."

For information about Christmas trading in West Bromwich, contact the council's markets service on 0121 553 3074.

The traditional fairground organ, providing festive music

Beards in seven-year jail term over killing

A WOMAN has been jailed for more than seven years for the 'shocking' manslaughter and rape of her friend after luring the victim to her home where she was assaulted and murdered.

Julie Beards admitted inviting 20-year-old Susan Whiting to her bungalow in Heather Close, Bloxwich, in August last year knowing that her husband planned to rape her.

The two women, both with learning disabilities, had met at Walsall Adult and Community College. A judge said Beards, 36, was 'suggestible' and controlled by her husband but knew what she was doing was 'very wrong' and had done nothing to prevent it.

Steven Beards was jailed for 33 years in May after being found guilty of the rape and murder of Ms Whiting. The same jury cleared his wife of murder under joint enterprise, instead convicting her of manslaughter, but failed to reach a verdict on the charge of aiding and abetting rape.

She faced a fresh trial but at the last minute pleaded guilty on the basis that she played a lesser role than was originally stated.

Susan Whiting was found dead under a bed at the Beards' home two days after visiting for a sleepover. She had been drugged before being raped by Steven Beard who then strangled her and delivered three fatal hammer blows to her head.

At Birmingham Crown Court last Wednesday, Mr Justice Green accepted that Julie Beards was 'genuinely scared' of her husband.

He concluded her culpability was low but that she could have persuaded Susan not to come. He also said she also knowingly helped her husband hide the body and lied to the police.

Advertisement

WORKS' parties, fairy lights, expectant youngsters writing gift lists, creative school Nativity plays where the wise men are replaced by aliens – it must be Christmas soon.

A time defined by more frenzied family activity than any other celebration on our calendars, stress levels begin to soar from the beginning of November.

But for a special group of people the normal irritating distractions that hinder festivities are magnified. Gift-buying, crowded store check-outs, seemingly ceaseless TV advertising for celebrity-branded perfumes and carols being played in shopping centres all too early, are no more of a problem to them than the rest of us.

For these people, the real 'Ba humbug!' moments are deeply personal – secrets that have been cleverly hidden away for years.

Often feeling foolish at the very thought of a 'confession' they continue every Christmas to stoically endure the celebrations, aching for them to finish soon.

But the truth is, things really could be very different for those countless denture wearers whose teeth are no longer able to function the way they should.

Party food Hell for poor dentures – seeded breads

Ill-fitting dentures and nuts just don't mix

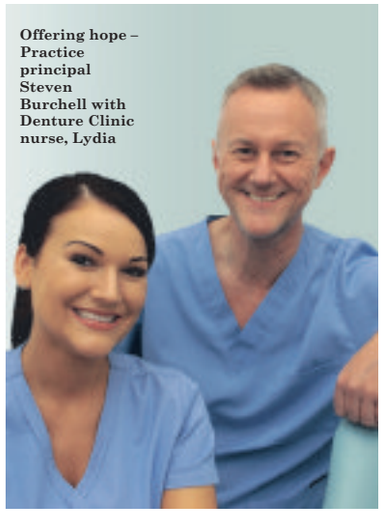
Dry turkey can also be a problem for ill-fitting teeth

Royal icing on Christmas cake – too hard for some

Will it be a difficult denture Christmas?

The heralds of Christmas are all around us – lights, crowds of shoppers and the first flush of works' parties. For most people it all promises to be loads of fun, but for some who wear dentures, the seasonal frivolity is no laughing matter. Principal of the Denture Clinic and North Street Dental and Implant Clinic, STEVEN BURCHELL DipCDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, offers a timely message of hope

There is absolutely no reason to put up with poor dentures
– Steven Burchell



Offering hope – Practice principal Steven Burchell with Denture Clinic nurse, Lydia

Hidden smiles

The natural harmonious fit that should exist between prosthetics and the soft tissues of the mouth can be lost over time and the consequence is at best miserable, but regularly life-changing for worse.

How do I know? For nearly 30 years I've been involved in denture provision and have been responsible for helping to resolve some of the worst-case scenarios ever seen presented in a surgery.

If you have denture issues and are reading this, chances are I've encountered your denture problem many times.

Poor dentures can steal spontaneity – even the natural response to those Christmas joyous moments can be stifled as laughing can be perilous, with the lower prosthetic tilting and slipping. Sadly, laughing can also present an opportunity for the very worst of 'denture moments' when the prosthetic loses all adhesion.

And as for seasonal colds . . . coughing is something that, certainly for some, needs to be done with teeth out. Stifled laughter, smiles hidden behind hands; is this any way to live when an answer can be so close at hand?

There are those too, whose days are strategically planned around the need to replenish dental fixative on their teeth.

Copious supplies are needed, secreted away in handbags, bathrooms, kitchens, cars, pockets, bags and other hiding places.

Just the simple task of eating a Christmas meal can become a hurdle which demands these 'must-have' strategies to survive the event.

Do you recognise any of the following?

- **The need for plausible excuses to leave the dining table to reload the dental fixative halfway through a meal**
- **That you must be seated where as few people as possible can see you eating**
- **Have excuses already in mind for missing out on that hard, royal icing Christmas cake, or Christmas pudding infused with brandy . . . and nuts**
- **Ensuring you don't have an extra glass of wine for fear of forgetting those dangerous dentures which seemingly have a mind of their own**
- **Struggling with sore spots and longing for the meal to end soon. Just too much pain**
- **Needing to go home early, just to get your teeth out**
- **Embarrassed by sunken cheeks and pinched lips and looking older than your years because your teeth are orally misplaced**
- **Ashamed by the aesthetics of your dentures which look like they just don't belong to your face**
- **Simply not wanting to join in the celebrations; always having to find a reason to avoid socialising**
- **A life ruled by dentures that just don't work – especially where there's party food**
- **No longer able to enjoy your favourite foods**
- **Restricted diet and generally a poor nutritional intake on a daily basis**

I once encountered a tragic case where a lady in her 80s had lived her whole adult life as a "consummate actress" because of failing false teeth.

She went out only to work, had no social life and rarely spoke to anyone.

She was deeply troubled by her ill-fitting dentures and the issues relating to them eclipsed her whole life.

A complex clinical case, I was privileged to help transform her life for the better many years ago.

She learned to live again in the latter years, making new friends, going to restaurants and stopping for conversations in the street.

Her regret – and mine too – that she just accepted her problem. Afraid of the dentist and fearful her appointment with me would disappoint, she suffered in silence.

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Her defining quote: "How I wish I could have done this years ago."

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Denture Clinic

Relief as rescue deal saves dozens of jobs

A RESCUE deal has saved the jobs of 78 Black Country workers at a firm run by five generations of a local family.

H&E Knowles (Lye), which has factories in Quarry Bank and Cradley, collapsed into administration, but a deal has now been done to sell the business to two family members.

Administrators from the restructuring services division of Mazars, the international professional services firm, were called in just 24 days before Christmas. They have secured the sale to Peter and Daniel Knowles, who have created a new business, H&E Knowles (Manufacturing), to buy certain parts of the business and assets from the administrators and save all the jobs of the 78-strong workforce.

Daniel Knowles said: "We are deeply saddened at the demise of our old family business. We have tried hard to save the jobs of the entire workforce. We are now looking forward to working together with the existing customers and suppliers."

Council awarded for Armed Forces efforts

Major-General Richard Stanford, presents the Mayor of Sandwell, Julie Webb, with the Employer Recognition

SANDWELL Council has won a prestigious silver award for its support for the Armed Forces Community.

The council, which has also just secured a £92,000 bid for a Covenant grant to support Armed Forces leavers and their families, was nominated for the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award.

It was given the Silver Award for its support of defence personnel in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The award acknowledged the council's initiatives including employing reservists and service leavers, providing advice on housing, leisure discounts, schools and learning, jobs and volunteering, welfare and financial support and health.

Sandwell is also backing Royal British Legion's Count Them In campaign. This calls for extra questions to be added into the 2021 census to improve understanding about the Armed Forces community and help ensure politicians, charities and services fully meet the needs of our serving personnel, veterans and their families.

And it has successfully bid for a Covenant Grant of £92,000 to support community integration through residential arts and outdoor adventure courses. Sandwell Council leader, Councillor Steve Eling, said: "We are proud to support our Armed forces and it's good to know our support is recognised in this prestigious award."

Earlier this year Sandwell Council pledged its ongoing support for people who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families.

The council is also encouraging local businesses, community groups and individuals to pledge their support too.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/armedforces to find out more. This webpage has advice on housing, leisure discounts, schools and learning, jobs and volunteering, welfare and financial support and health.

If you would like to pledge your support to the Sandwell Armed Forces Community Covenant, please call Bal Dhillon on 0121 569 5177 or email bal_dhillon@sandwell.gov.uk. Your pledge will be added to our covenant book of support.

Stamp of approval for car park as post office

A MOBILE post office is being drafted on a pub car park in Hagley from this week.

The innovative move is seen as solution to the temporary closure of the village branch on Worcester Road.

From yesterday (Wednesday), a post office van will be situated at the Station Inn, on the same road.

Manageress Georgina Jackson said she was happy to help out. "If I can do anything to help the community then I will do," she said.

Hagley Parish Council chairman Steve Colella said: "A lot of people use that post office, including to collect their pensions and send parcels. We were concerned about not having that important service for around four to five months, especially during Christmas when it is needed more than ever."

The village's branch, shut on November 23 in order for refurbishments to be carried out, including a new extension.

Alternative

The Station In car park was seen a good alternative location until the branch reopened. Post Office then approached Georgina Jackson, manageress of the nearby Station Inn, after identifying that her pub car park was a good alternative location.

She said: "They asked me if they could use the car park, and I was happy to help out.The mobile post office will be parked outside the pub from 10am to 3pm every Wednesday and Friday.

A Post Office spokesman said: "We expect the modern new branch to open in March 2017 and posters will be displayed locally at least two weeks before the branch opens to let customers know the exact date.

"After the refurbishment Post Office services will be offered from two open plan style service points, integrated into the retail counter. "

The new branch will be open seven days a week from 7am to 8pm, as opposed to the previous opening times of 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.

The Post Office spokesman added services would continue to be available at Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Merry Hill branches in the meantime.

Kitted out for all seasons

Sedgley Scorpions East under-7s show off their new all-weather coats thanks to sponsorship from Jacopa

A JUNIOR football team has been given a helping hand by West Bromwich-based wastewater treatment specialist Jacopa.

The firm has sponsored Sedgley Scorpions East under-7s, supplying all-weather coats to keep the lads dry during training and matches.

The team plays in the Walsall Junior Youth Football League and Jacopa were particularly keen to show the company's support for the youngsters as team manager Adrian Lewis is both an employee and father to one of the team's players Jacob. Adrian said: "I'm really committed to these youngsters who may be our future superstars so I approached my MD to ask if the company would like to be involved.

"I was therefore delighted when he kindly offered to provide the boys with all-weather coats, I can't thank Jacopa enough for their support."

Jacopa Managing Director Alex Lloyd said: "We are keen to support the local community and our sponsorship of Sedgeley Scorpions East allows us to do just that."

Mica Paris as Mama Morton

Velma Kelly (Sophie Carmen-Jones) with the chorus of Chicago

Hayley Tamaddon as Roxie Hart

Billy Flynn (John Partridge) with Roxie Hart (Hayley Tamaddon)

Sultry, sexy Chicago!

Chicago, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THEY'RE giving it the old razzle dazzle at the Alex this year, turning it into a joint where the gin is cold and the piano is hot for the latest revival of ever-popular jazz age musical Chicago.

The 1920s-set story about femme fatales turned into paparazzi celebrities is a delirious blend of vaudeville, cynical humour and sex appeal.

The dangerous dames of the Cell Block Tango have seldom been more sultry than in this touring production, that takes up residence as an alternative to panto in the second city until its final performance on New Year's Eve.

The choreography of Bob Fosse sizzles as the scantily clad girls and boys of the chorus slink, slide and stretch in the most provocative dance routines this side of Cabaret, that other Kander and Ebb classic.

But can soap stars cut it in the major roles? The answer is a resounding yes. Hayley Tamaddon, best known for roles in Emmerdale, Coronation Street, and her skating exploits, is a real song and dance woman with a nice edge of quirky humour as Roxie Hart. What she lacks in stature to Sophie Carmen-Jones's high-kicking Velma Kelly, she more than makes up for in chutzpah.

Former EastEnder John Partridge brings a manic hint of menace to the role of supersmooth shyster lawyer Billy Flynn, whilst Mica Paris brings soul power to the role of Mama Morton, prison fixer and 'countess of the clink'.

Strong support comes from Neil Ditt as the hapless Amos Hart – his Mister Cellophane number is excellent – and A D Richardson as the alarmingly pseudo-operatic rose-tinted columnist Mary Sunshine. Having a jazz band on stage as part of the action adds to this production's kinetic energy.

The first night audience on Monday loved it. Chicago is a sure bet for satisfaction if you're looking for a grown-up showbiz spectacular, and all that jazz, this festive season.

Leon Burakowski

A scene from Billy Flynn's big number All I Care About

Queen Square, Wolverhampton, around 1920

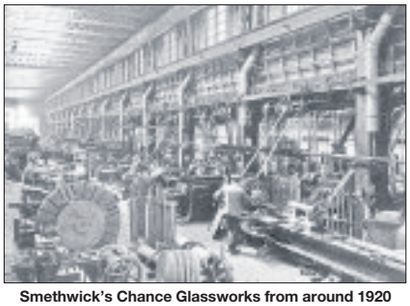
Star & Garter, Victoria Street, Wolverhampton

Dudley Zoo's bear pit and viewing platform in 1930

Waiting anxiously for news after the Hamstead pit disaster 1908

Chronicling the birth of the Black Country

A bustling Dudley Street, Wolverhampton, around 1900


Smethwick's Chance Glassworks from around 1920

BLASTS of hot air billowed from furnaces while the streets rang out with the pounding of great steam hammers and the shriek of whistling boilers.

This was the Black Country at the height of Victoria's reign and beyond as the rapid rise in manufacturing exploded across the face of England.

Between 1820 and 1914, Britain was transformed on a scale unprecedented in its history. By the start of the First World War, it was a staggeringly wealthy country.

A century earlier, England was a very different place, with little over a third of its population living in towns and cities. By the outbreak of war, industrialisation had seen that number soar to almost 80 per cent. A new book, The Lost Country, has recorded the changing face of England over six tumultuous decades from 1870 to 1930 in images from national archives.

A crowded Dudley Street in Wolverhampton taken around 1900 shows a

MEMORY LANE

By Marion Brennan

prosperous town with shops offering factory-produced consumer items. Freeman Hardy & Willis, on the right of the picture, was opening its chain of shoe shops at the time.

A horse and carriage stands outside the 16th century Star & Garter Hotel in Victoria Street where Charles I allegedly took shelter on the march to Edge Hill, hence the 'Royal' reference. The historic inn was sold and demolished in 1904.

A picture of Queen Square with St Peter's church in the background shows a woman pushing a pram as she walks through a bustling market place. The book also features an image of the zoo's bear pit and viewing platform, which were considered innovative and modernist for the time.

Workers are seen at machines in two pictures taken inside the Beans factory, Dudley. In 1907 George Bean became chairman of the company which had been founded by Absolom Harper in 1822. Originally a supplier of car parts, during the Great War the company made aero engines, shrapnel and shell cases for the Government. After the war, the firm manufactured the Bean Motor Car.

A photograph taken around 1920 shows Chance Glassworks in Spon Lane South, Smethwick, which produced the window glass for the Houses of Parliament.

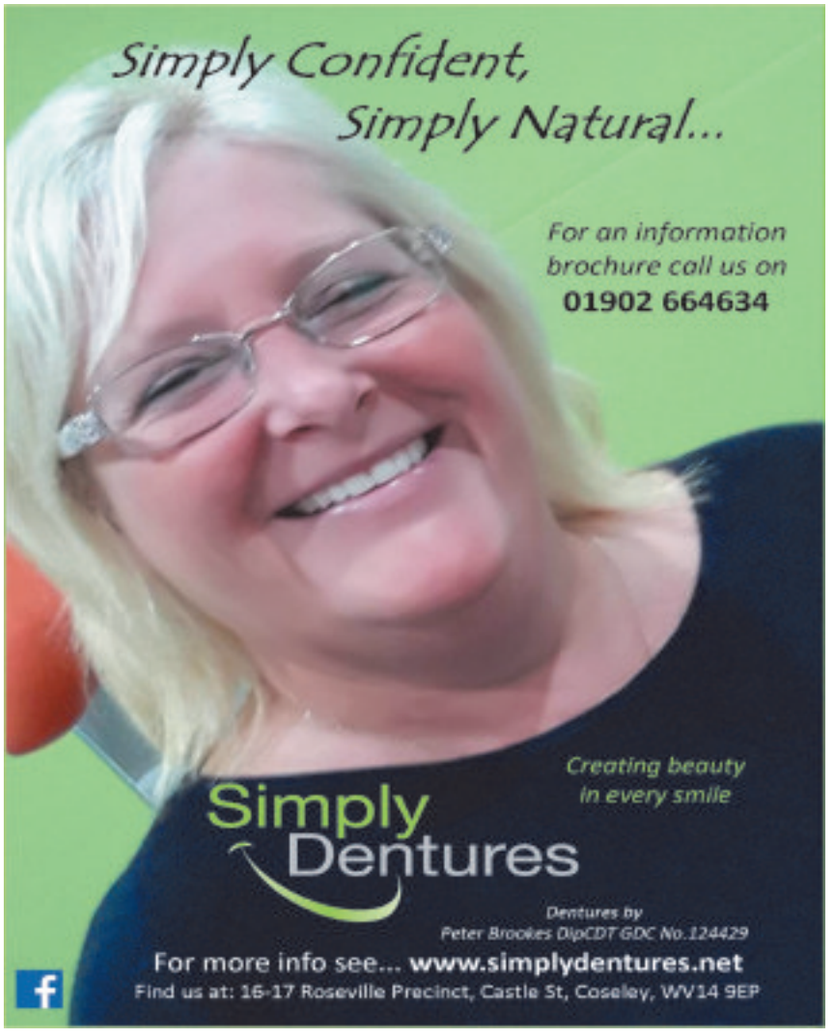
In darker scene, an image captures families at the pithead of Hamstead Colliery, Great Barr, in 1908, as they waited for news of victims of a mining disaster. The deep veins of coal were mined with some risk, as was proven when a fire broke out underground and 26 men died form inhaling poisonous fumes.

One of the earliest photos features Bilston Town Hall in Lichfield Street in around 1880. The building reflected the growth of the status of the town from a village on the outskirts of Wolverhampton to a burgeoning coal mining area and later a centre for steel production.

* Lost England, price £45, by Philip Davies is published by Atlantic.

Bilston Town Hall, Lichfield Street, circa 1880

Young boys working at the die shop at Beans, Dudley,



Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

New titles to educate and adorn coffee tables

THINKING of buying your loved one a gardening book for Christmas? Hannah Stephenson leafs through a flurry of new titles ranging from coffee table tomes to practical guides and reference stalwarts.

AS winter beckons and thoughts of the festive season are upon us, now is a good time to plan new beds and borders, find inspiring ideas for your garden and work out how you want your garden to look next year.

Gardening books provide a wealth of inspiration - so whether you're looking for a gift to put under the tree or simply want to examine a new or traditional garden style yourself, here are a few of the books which should get the green-fingered creative juices flowing...

:: Thenford: The Creation Of An English Garden

By Michael and Anne Heseltine (Head of Zeus, £40): This coffee table tome tells the story in words and pictures of Michael and Anne Heseltine's Northamptonshire home, charting the development of the garden over 40 years. It started off as an overgrown woodland, but today there's an arboretum with more than 3,000 varieties of trees and shrubs, medieval fish ponds, a rill water feature and a beautifully restored walled garden.

:: RHS A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants

Edited by Christopher Brickell (DK, £75): This is a Christmas gift to end all Christmas gifts for gardeners, a beautiful reference tool packed with fantastic images and clear descriptions and growing advice for more than 15,000 plants. It's been updated with more than 5,000 new plant entries and new photographs and comes in a majestic presentation box.

:: House Of Plants: Living With Succulents, Air Plants And Cacti

By Caro Langton and Rose Ray (Frances Lincoln, £20): If you love indoor greenery with the minimum of fuss, this book focuses on houseplants that are perfect for urban living, showing both the aspiring and experienced plant enthusiast how to nurture, share and enjoy them, as well as arranging them stylishly in the home.

:: The Quest For Shakespeare's Garden

By Roy Strong (Thames & Hudson, £14.95): Published in association with Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Sir Roy Strong's lively account traces the origins of the Elizabethan garden and tells the story of the Bard's own garden. Accompanied by quotations from Shakespeare's works, it features beautiful illustrations of his gardens, past and present.

:: Gardenista: The Definitive Guide To Stylish Outdoor Spaces

By Michelle Slatalla with the editors of Gardenista (Artisan, £28.99): Full page pictures illustrate the terrific ideas offered by this first book from the team behind Gardenista.com. With more than 1.1 million visitors a month, Gardenista has become one of the online destination source books for garden and exterior design fans. It features tours of 12 outdoor spaces including a fairy-tale garden, a cottage garden and a posh and pampered greenhouse.

:: Plant Love: The Scandalous Truth About The Sex Life Of Plants

By Michael Allaby (Filbert Press, £14.99): Want to know about botanic sex? Find out in this revealing stocking-filler, an expose of more than 200 of nature's most unseemly liaisons. There's nectar and pollen, but there are also teasers which deliver nothing and cheating among plants takes many forms. Find out how avocado flowers are female one day and male the next, how the violet really does shrink and how giraffes pollinate certain trees.

:: Garden Flora

By Noel Kingsbury (Timber Press, £29.99): Did you know that epimediums contain a compound similar to that which you find in Viagra? Or that ancient armies were reduced by eating poisonous rhododendron honey? This fascinating book examines the cultural and natural history of 133 of the most beloved garden plants, revealing their survival strategies, growth habit and uses. It includes everything from the acer to the zinnia.

:: Vertical Gardens

By Leigh Clapp and Hattie Klotz (New Holland Publishers, £16.99): Gardening no longer needs to be confined to the ground. If you have limited space, this innovative guide offers quirky low-maintenance, space-saving, water-smart solutions, with ideas for vertical gardening on your balcony, your rooftop or courtyard. Learn how to turn bare garden spaces, such as a blank wall or fence, into living walls.

A brisk walk for every mince pie could become a new family tradition

An hour's fast swim will burn off that Christmas pudding with custard and brandy butter

Don't forget to factor in the festive workout

By Abi Jackson

WANT the Christmas treats but not the seasonal weight gain? Simple – just factor in some winter wonderland workouts.

Healthy eating has never been trendier – and that's fantastic. But, as those really in the know will tell you, it's all about the balance, and there are certain occasions when treats should well and truly be on the menu.

And the ultimate example of this? Christmas, obviously.

Feasting is part of the festive fun, and life is too short to never indulge. This is about far more than the joy of semi-permanently affixing a tub of Celebrations to the end of your arm for the Christmas weekend. For many, this is also part and parcel of having some quality time with family and friends, and clinking glasses and good grub can help bring the celebration to life.

There's always a flip-side, of course, and nobody's saying it's a good idea to gorge mindlessly – especially as it's estimated the average Brit consumes a whopping 7,000 kcals on Christmas Day alone, and will gain 6lbs between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day (eek!).

Thankfully, keeping active (is there anything lovelier than a walk on a crisp, peaceful winter's morning?) will help offset the calorific damage.

Here are five Christmas Calorie Kings – and what you'd need to do (bearing in mind that the exact amount of calories burned will depend on your weight, muscle mass and exercise intensity levels, of course) to burn them off...

One mince pie – approx 200 kcals
Burn it off – brisk one-hour walk

One of the great things about walking is that although it can feel like more of a pleasure than exercise, it still works wonders for health and fitness - and gets you out in the fresh air. A family walk would make a wonderful new tradition. It gets people out of the house and lets the kids run around a bit. Walking is also a fairly easy exercise that most of the family can do together. Another option would be bowling or ice-skating.

Glass of bucks fizz – approx 100 kcals
Burn it off – 10 minutes of rope skipping or a 'living room workout!'

Can't afford or get to the gym? No fancy exercise equipment? No excuse! Get creative and do a quick workout at home. Skipping with a rope is a fantastic way to get your heart rate up – it gets you breathless in no time – or you could achieve similar results by doing a short session of burpees, star jumps and some body-weight exercises. You could also make these short bursts of exercise friendly competitions with family members – another new family tradition!

Six Quality Street chocolates – approx 260 kcals
Burn it off – Half an hour dancing

Go on; turn the TV off for half an hour and crank up the festive tunes. Whether you're by yourself, with the stuffy in-laws (oo-er) or have the whole clan round for the holidays, a bit of a living room boogie will work wonders for offsetting the seasonal stress and sluggishness. It might feel a bit daft at first if you're not used to letting your hair down, but what have you got to lose? (Well, those extra festive calories for a start...) And, do you know what? We bet you'll be laughing by the end.

Big Christmas dinner with all the trimmings – 1,500 kcals
Burn it off – Two-hours of running (or lots of regular exercise!)

It takes a fair bit of effort to burn off the average Christmas dinner, when portion control goes out the window and many of us eat until we need to lie down and undo our waistbands. It is possible to burn 1,500 kcals in one workout, but attempting that isn't really a good idea unless you're already very active and used to that level of intensity. A better approach, for most, would be to aim to do regular, moderate-vigorous exercise such as an hour-long friendly football match in the park with mates, where you put effort into sprinting to the ball, an indoor cycling class, bootcamp class or a parkrun.

Another option to get heart rate up is manual labour – shovelling snow, gardening, clearing out the garage or vacuuming the house.

Christmas pudding with custard and/or brandy butter – approx 900 kcals
Burn it off – one-hour fast swim

Low-impact, and therefore gentle on joints, accessible and often suitable for those living with disabilities or chronic pain conditions too, swimming really is a fantastic form of exercise. If you can't manage a fast, one-hour swim, simply break it down to regular, manageable chunks.

Christmas dinner with all the trimmings? You'll need to do two hours of running to burn off the extra calories

Six Quality Street chocolates will give you around 260 calories

A glass of bucks fizz is around 10 minutes of skipping

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See Page 21

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

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Wednesday, 7pm
02 Institute, Birmingham
Tickets sold out a while ago for the return of the 2012 X Factor champion who has won over new fans with his Back From The Edge album.
Visit **academymusicgroup.com/o2institutebirmingham**

Festive Favourites

Friday and Monday, 7.30pm, Sunday, 3.30pm, 7.30pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
Actress Jessica Hynes (pictured) presents a series of Christmas concerts featuring the CBSO's various choral groups, conducted by Simon Halsey.
Visit **thsh.co.uk**

Tinned Astronaut

Saturday, 7pm
Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
Wolftown put on another showcase of the best new bands in the city, including Tinned Astronaut, Blick Black and the Chillholers, Second Hand Genes, HDS and Runaway Hounds.
Visit **wolvescivic.co.uk**

Katherine Jenkins

Thursday, 7.30pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
The celebrated Welsh soprano joins the London Concert Orchestra for a celebration with songs from her recent album celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday plus festive favourites.
Visit **thsh.co.uk**

CHRISTMAS

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Tonight - tomorrow, £8
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN.
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Or 07986 577 661

Traditional Christmas Evenings
Tonight - Sun,
The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, DY1 4SQ.
Call 01215 579643

Festive Favourites
Tonight, Sun - Mon, various
Birmingham Symphony Hall, The International Convention Centre, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Roving Canal Traders Floating Christmas Market
Today - tomorrow,
Barclaycard Arena, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Christmas Charity Concert with Birmingham Festival Choral Society
Tomorrow,
Ladywood ARC, Birmingham, B16 8TF.
Call 0121 4540973

Christmas Crafts
Tomorrow,
Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve, West Bromwich, B43 5AG.
Call 0121 357 7395

Christmas storytelling in the house
Tomorrow,
Croome Court, High Green, Worcester, WR8 9DW.
Call 01905 371006

Christmas Ramble
Sun,
Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard, Shifnal, TF11 8LE.
Call 01952 852100

Solihull Photographic Society – Christmas Knock Out
Tue,
Solihull Women's Institute, B91 3DQ.
Call 07815 165438

Carols and Sunday Lunch
Sun,
Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard, Shifnal, TF11 8LE.
Call 01952 852100

Christmas Crafts
Sun,
Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve, West Bromwich, B43 5AG.
Call 0121 357 7395

Woodland Father Christmas
Sun,
Clent Hills, B62 0NL.
Call 01562 712 822

Ex Cathedra: Christmas Music by Candlelight
Mon - Wed,
St. Pauls Church, St. Pauls Square, Birmingham, B3 1QZ.
Call 0121 236 7858

Andy Williams Christmas Extravaganza 2016 starring The Osmonds
Thu,
Malvern Theatres, WR14 3HB.
Call 01684 892277

Fred Zeppelin Xmas Bash
Thu, £10 - £12
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

ROCK & METAL

Hells Bells – the UK's best AC/DC tribute
Tonight, £8 - £9
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Bowie Experience
Tonight,
Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

Status Quo: The Last Night of the Electrics
Tonight,
Barclaycard Arena, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Dark Side Of The Wall – a tribute to Pink Floyd
Tomorrow, £8 - £10
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Madness
Tomorrow,
Barclaycard Arena, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Wolftown ft. Tinned Astronaut + others
Tomorrow,
The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP.
Call 01902 552122

The Stones
Tonight,
Theatre on the Steps, Bridgnorth, WV16 4BD. Call 01746 766477

Touchstone – Christmas Bash
Sun, £17.50 - £20
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Sweet featuring Andy Scott
Mon, £20 - £22.50
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Hair Rock Experience
Thu, £5
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

Kit Hawes & Aaron Catlow
Tonight,
SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, SY9 5AY.
Call 01588 630321
or 01588 638038

Hollis & Hawkes Live Acoustic Set
Tonight,
Six Eight Kafe, Birmingham, B2 5HG.
Call 0121 448 8089

Traditional Music Session
Sun,
The Prince of Wales Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8EE.
Call 0121 4494198

JAZZ, SOUL, BLUES, MOTOWN & REGGAE

Red Lemon Electric Blues Band
Tonight,
Stourbridge Town Hall, DY8 1YE.
Call 01384 812960

Soul City
Sun, £18
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Urban Intro
Mon - Wed, £5 - £10
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Jazz Tuesdays
Tue,
Spotted Dog, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0NH.
Call 0121 772 3822

Detroit Soul
Thu,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

POP

Spice Girls Tribute Night at Bel Air Nightclub
Tonight - Thu,
The Belfry Hotel & Resort, Wishaw, Sutton Coldfield, B76 9PR. Call 0844 980 0600

Showaddywaddy
Tomorrow, £20 - £22
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Sunday Classics
Sun,
Spotted Dog, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0NH.
Call 0121 772 3822

James Arthur
Wed, 7pm
O2 Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 437 4150

CLASSICAL

Stourport Choral Society
Wed,
Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973

Katherine Jenkins
Thu, 7pm
Birmingham Symphony Hall, The International Convention Centre, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

COMEDY

Ken Dodd – Happiness Show
Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

King Kong Comedy Club
Thu,
Gunmakers Arms, Birmingham, B4 6HG.
Call 0121 236 8486

THEATRE

Robin Hood: The Panto
Tonight - tomorrow,
Ludlow Assembly Rooms, SY8 1AZ.
Call 01584 878141

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
Tonight, £8 - £16
Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Pershore WR10 1BG.
Call 01386 555028

Treasure Island
Tonight - Thu,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Chicago The Musical
Tonight - Thu,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Faulty Towers The Dining Experience
Tonight - tomorrow, £50
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

A Christmas Carol
Tonight - tomorrow,
The Crescent Theatre, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Aladdin
Tonight - tomorrow,
Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham, B27 7RY.
Call 0121 707 1874

Robin Rood: The Panto (relaxed performance)
Sun, £5 - £22
Ludlow Assembly Rooms, SY8 1AZ. Call 01584 878141

The Muppet Christmas Carol (film screening)
Sun,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Bolshoi: The Nutcracker
Sun, £11.20 - £13.44
Malvern Theatres, WR14 3HB.
Call 01684 892277

A Christmas Wassail 2016
Sun - Tue,
The Crescent Theatre, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Snow White – The World's Biggest Pantomime
Mon - Thu,
Barclaycard Arena, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Dick Whittington
Mon - Thu,
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

Moscow State Circus
Tue - Thu,
Star City, Birmingham, B7 5SA.
Call 0121 270 4455

ARTS & CULTURE

Furs, Fire and Ice
Tonight,
Dewsall Court, Dewsall, Hereford, HR2 8DA.
Call 01432 276 724

The Roaring 20s Party
Tonight - Sun, Thu,
The International Convention Centre, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 200 2000

Short Introductory Talk: Help & Healing on the Spiritual Path through the teaching of Bruno Groening
Tomorrow, Free
The Polish Millenium Centre, Birmingham, B5 5PH.
Call 0121 643 3577

Cellar Tour
Erasmus Darwin House, Lichfield, WS13 7AD.
Call 01543 306260

Whyley Dance
Tue,
Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973

Chance to Dance
Thu,
Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

EastEnder caught acting bug in Brum

STEVE 'Phil Mitchell' McFadden is a total rat. He's a dirty rat. He's King Rat.

From Monday to January 29 he'll be hamming it up with John Barrowman, comedy duo The Krankies, comedian Matt Slack, Over The Rainbow winner Danielle Hope and I'd Do Anything winner Jodie Prenger in Birmingham's biggest panto.

Audiences can expect plenty of laughs, outrageous costumes, wonderful sets and scenery, and some amazing special effects in Dick Whittington.

"It'll be good fun," he says. "I cut my teeth in panto working with Matt Slack. We're good mates. We hang out together and go for drinks. He's been on EastEnders as well."

Steve, Matt and co have spent several weeks getting the show in shape.

Steve's professional career has mostly centred in London. He hails from Maida Vale, learned how to act at Rada and played EastEnders hardman Phil Mitchell at the BBC's London studios. Birmingham, however, may well have put him on the road to his acting career.

Back in the 1970s he visited the Second City regularly to flog perfume and jewellery as he tried to earn a few bob as a Del Boy-style market trader.

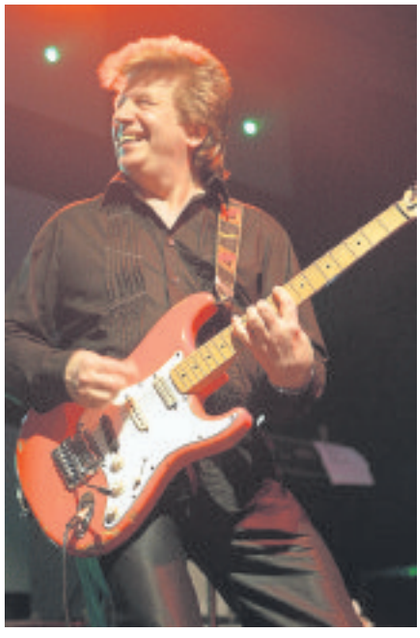
"I used to work with my dad on the walkway to the Bull Ring," he says. "We used to park the old Austin Morris and have a bit of kit in the back. Then we'd do the walkway. I just remember this big wide concourse and we'd sell out every time.

"If it was raining in London we'd come up at the weekend and sell in Birmingham instead. We'd smash it and we'd have a good laugh with the people."

The gear was straight up guv. Honest. And working as an out-of-the-suitcase trader helped turn Steve onto acting.

"We had a bit of a Del Boy thing with my dad and his partner. We'd turn the milk crates upside down and sell off the top. I'd always have a laugh with the Brummies. In many ways, that was my first steps into acting, the first time I was dealing with the public face-to-face. I got confident doing that."

Steve 'Phil Mitchell' McFadden with Hippodrome panto co-star and pal Matt Slack



Sweet 70s memories

BLOCKBUSTER! Hellraiser, Teenage Rampage, Ballroom Blitz... solid gold glam rock 1970s hits that put The Sweet on Top Of The Pops and the cover of teenybopper mags more than 40 years ago.

Sweet are back on the road with original guitarist and co-singer Andy Scott (pictured left), including a gig at Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Monday. Original lead singer Brian Connolly died in 1997. Andy Scott's version of the band features lead vocals from bassist Pete Lincoln, who previously worked with Shakin' Stevens and Sir Cliff Richard. The band also features two former members of melodic hard rock outfit Praying Mantis, keyboards/guitarist Tony O'Hora and drummer Bruce Bisland.

Sweet are also special guests at the Bay City Rollers' Shang-a-Lang-a-Xmas Show at Wolverhampton Civic Hall tonight (Thursday), featuring original Rollers Les McKeown, Alan Longmuir and Stuart Wood.

The Sweet's 70s Black Country rivals Slade, featuring originals Dave Hill and Don Powell, have sold out their 'Ome Town gig at the Robin tomorrow (Friday).

Fans of rock 'n' roll can join 70s hitmakers, Showaddywaddy, at the Robin on Saturday. The retro outfit had ten top five hits – Hey Rock and Roll, Under the Moon of Love, When, You Got What It Takes, Three Steps to Heaven, Heartbeat, I Wonder Why, Dancin' Party, A Little Bit of Soap, and Pretty Little Angel Eyes. Ex-singer Dave Bartram has been the band's manager for 30 years and Andy Pelos took over as lead singer five years ago. The group features original members Romeo Challenger and Rod Deas.

Region's rockers in showcase gigs

CHECK out young bands tipped to break out of the West Midlands scene in 2017 at the showcase gig run by Baddies Boogie at the 02 Institute in Digbeth tomorrow night (Friday).

The five band line up in The Blue Room features Kung Fu Rin Tin Tin plus Brum outfit State, Wolverhampton four-piece Shush, Kidderminster's Plastic Scene and the Black Country's Rebellion.

It's the same night Wolverhampton powerhouse rock trio God Dam have a late finishing gig at the Hare and Hounds pub in Kings Heath. Also on that bill are Johnny Foreigner, Youth Man, False Grails and Matters.

Red hot and blue with the Lemons

RED Lemons Electric Blues Band, one of the top live bands in the Black Country and Brum back in the '80s, have got the band back together for another reunion concert.

Following the success of last year's 30 year reunion shows, the Red Lemons are going to bring their good time R&B and soul back to Stourbridge Town Hall tomorrow night (Friday).

The band fronted by Big Jim Merris has celebrity fans including brief former member Adrian Chiles and Suzi Perry. The gig is on its way to being a sell-out. Tickets cost £22, on 0870 320 7000, or see www.dudley.gov.uk/entertainment website.

Jungle Joel jokes at Slade Rooms

COMEDIAN and actor Joel Dommett will bring his new show to Wolverhampton next year. The runner-up in this year's I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here, will perform at the Slade Rooms on March 2.

Starting out on the comedy scene in 2007, the 30-year-old has gone onto receive critical acclaim for his Edinburgh Fringe shows and in numerous television shows.

Meanwhile, satirical comedian Andy Zaltman brings his Plan Z to the same Broad Street venue on February 24.

For tickets call 0870 320 7000, or email boxoffice@wolvescivic.co.uk.

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

CHOICE

Darcey Bussell

Strictly Come Dancing (BBC1, 6.40pm)
Over the past 13 weeks, we've experienced highs, lows and Ed Balls performing a salsa to Gangnam Style, but hopefully Strictly has still got some surprises in store as the remaining celebrity finalists face one last ballroom battle to see who will be lifting the famous trophy. Some viewers pegged Danny Mac as the winner following his impressive week one cha cha cha, but we could be in for an upset as the stars perform three routines– their favourite number from the series, the judges' choice (which in previous years has usually been one the celebrity didn't quite nail to see if they can improve) and the no-holds-barred showdance. There'll also be group number, a performance by Emeli Sande.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Sports Personality 2016: The Contenders. (R) **2.15** Bargain Hunt. **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.30** BBC News. **5.40** Regional Programme. **5.50** Pointless Celebrities.

6.40 Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the live grand final, which sees the remaining three celebrities and their partners performing three routines each – a spectacular showdance, a routine from the series chosen by the judges and the one routine they hope will help them lift the glitterball trophy. Len Goodman, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell give their comments and score the performances, but they are for guidance only – the decision as to who waltzes off with this year's title is strictly down to the viewers' vote. Last in the series.

8.55 Michael McIntyre's Big Show. Jack Whitehall joins Michael on stage at London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane, along with Sting, who performs some of his classic hits, and music from his new album 57th & 9th. Plus, Ricky Gervais's insufferable middle-manager-turned-musician David Brent makes a special appearance. Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver risks the ire of his friends and family as Michael seizes his phone in Send To All, and two people from the same family receive the surprise of their lives in Unexpected Star.

9.55 BBC News; Weather.

10.15 The National Lottery Live. The all-important winning numbers are revealed.

10.25 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Crystal Palace v Chelsea and West Bromwich Albion v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.

11.45 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman looks at the major stories shaping the NFL world, joined by former Super Bowl winners Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell.

12.15 Film: Old School. (2003) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.50 Film: Holiday Affair. (1949) **8.15 Film:** The Bishop's Wife. (1947) **10.00** This Farming Life. (R) **11.00** This Farming Life. (R) **12.00** Wild Japan. (R) **1.00** Wild Japan. (R) **2.00** Wild Japan. (R) **3.00 Film:** The Odd Life of Timothy Green. (2012) Fantasy, starring Jennifer Garner. **4.35 Film:** Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger! (2012) Comedy sequel, starring David Tennant.

6.25 Dad's Army. First-ever episode of the classic comedy, in which bank manager George Mainwaring assembles a motley crew of volunteers to protect Britain from Nazi invasion. Arthur Lowe stars.

6.55 Operation Snow Tiger. Part two of two. Cameraman Max Hug Williams follows a tiger to see if she has new cubs, while Liz Bonnin searches for another female that has gone missing. (R)

7.55 Walt Disney – Part Two. Documentary exploring the life, career and legacy of Walt Disney, presenting a portrait of the animator as an ambitious entrepreneur whose masterpieces defined an industry.

8.55 Film: A Christmas Carol. (2009) A foul-tempered Victorian miser who hates the festive season is visited on Christmas Eve by a series of ghosts. The spirits intend to make him mend his wicked ways by showing him visions of the past, the present and what the future will hold for him if he does not change for the better. Animated fantasy based on Charles Dickens' novel, featuring motion-captured performances by Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman.

10.25 QI XL. Sandi Toksvig quizzes guests Miles Jupp, Deirdre O'Kane and Phill Jupitus and regular panelist Alan Davies on a series of subjects involving non sequiturs in this extended episode.

11.10 Porridge. Fletch discovers fellow inmates at Slade Prison are planning an escape over Christmas. Festive edition from 1975, with Ronnie Barker. (R)

11.50 The Making of Young Men. Documentary going behind the scenes of BalletBoyz' first feature film, a re-working of the company's hugely successful stage production of the same name that premiered in 2015.

12.20 Balletboyz – Young Men. (R) **1.20 Film:** Chances Are. (1989) **3.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.25** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.30** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30 Film:** Carry On Follow That Camel. (1967) Comedy, with Jim Dale. **11.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** This Time Next Year. (R) **1.35 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium. (2007) Fantasy comedy, starring Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman. **3.20** Thunderbirds Are Go. **3.45** Regional Programme ; Weather.**4.00** ITV News; Weather. **4.15 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. (2001) Fantasy adventure, starring Elijah Wood.

7.30 Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. When the group journeys into the Misty Mountains, Bilbo becomes separated from the dwarves and falls into a cave, where he finds himself confronted by Gollum and forced to play a riddle game. It is set in Middle-earth 60 years before the events of The Lord of the Rings and is the first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott, Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm and Christopher Lee.

10.40 ITV News; Weather.

10.55 Film: Private Benjamin. (1980) A society widow enlists in the army in the hope of finding a new direction, but comes into conflict with her tough commanding officer. Comedy, with Goldie Hawn and Armand Assante.

12.55 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Three Peaks Yacht Race. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.15** The Simpsons. (R) **11.45 Film:** The Dog Who Saved the Holidays. (2012) Premiere. Comedy sequel, starring Shelley Long. **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot and Haydock Park. **4.05** The Simpsons. (R) **4.35** The Simpsons. (R) **5.05** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas. (R) **5.40 Film:** Arthur Christmas. (2011) Animated comedy, with the voice of James McAvoy.

7.30 Channel 4 News.

8.00 Tree of the Year with Ardal O'Hanlon. The comedian and former Father Ted actor visits some of the UK's most remarkable trees, before revealing the winners of the Woodland Trust's prestigious Tree of the Year awards from a 28-strong shortlist. Each winning specimen from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales is then put to a panel of experts, who select just one of the four to take the overall title of UK Tree of the Year.

9.00 It Was Alright in the 1970s. Matt Lucas narrates this look at the programmes that flirted with danger during the decade, including Blue Peter, which carried on filming as a fire broke out live on air, while The Fun of the Fair showed teenage girls riding motorcycles through burning hoops. At the same time government-produced public information films petrified viewers with scary scenarios of possible accidents in the home. Contributors include Robin Askwith, Liza Goddard, Oona King, Clive Anderson, Philippa Perry, Samira Ahmed, Ellie Taylor and Angela Barnes.

10.00 Film: Escape Plan. (2013) A security expert is incarcerated after being duped and tries to break out with the help of a fellow convict. Thriller, with Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

12.15 Film: The Guest. (2014) **2.00** Bear's Wild Weekend with Jonathan Ross. (R) **2.50** The Last Leg. (R) **3.45** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.15 Film:** A Cinderella Christmas. (2016) **1.05 Film:** Christmas Cookies. (2016) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Jill Wagner and Wes Brown. **2.50 Film:** Love Always, Santa. (2016) Premiere. Festive romance, starring Marguerite Moreau. **4.35 Film:** Christmas Under Wraps. (2014) Premiere. Drama, starring Candace Cameron Bure.

6.25 Film: Space Cowboys. (2000) A former Air Force test pilot, who was sidelined from space exploration because of his difficult character, is recruited 40 years later to help America's post-Cold War Russian allies. Teaming up with three fellow veteran airmen, he uses his expertise in navigation to stop a malfunctioning Soviet satellite from crashing to Earth. Adventure, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. With Tommy Lee Jones, James Garner, Donald Sutherland and James Cromwell. Includes 5 News at 7.25pm. Edited for language.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Burton Albion v Newcastle United at the Pirelli Stadium, Birmingham City v Brighton & Hove Albion at the AMEX Stadium and Blackburn Rovers v Reading at Ewood Park.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in the Leagues One and Two, including Scunthorpe United v Millwall.

10.30 The Funny Thing About Christmas. A selection of comedians and celebrities, including Anthea Turner, Vanessa Feltz, Carl Fogarty and Kerry Godliman, discuss everything they love and loathe about the festive season.

11.30 Greatest Ever Christmas Songs. A celebratory compilation of some of the biggest festive songs over the last 50 years, featuring a wide variety of artists including the Pogues, Johnny Mathis and the Darkness.

1.25 SuperCasino. **3.10** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **4.00** The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Queen Elizabeth I: A Timewatch Guide **8.00** Last Journey of the Magna Carta King **9.00** Modus **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1982 **11.00** Ultimate Number 1s at the BBC **12.00** Agnetha: Abba and After **1.00** Kings of 70s Romance **2.00** Burt Bacharach: A Life in Song **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.35 Catchphrase Celebrity Special **12.35** You've Been Framed! at Christmas **1.35** Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas **2.35 Film:** Peter Pan (2003) **3.35** FYI Daily **3.40 Film:** Peter Pan (2003) **4.45 Film:** Snow Dogs (2002) **7.00** You've Been Framed! at Christmas **8.00** Scorpion **9.00 Film:** A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas (2011) **10.50** Family Guy **12.15** Mom **12.40** American Dad! **1.10 Film:** Bring It On (2000) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
1.50 Foyle's War **3.50** Midsomer Murders **5.55** Midsomer Murders: Ghosts of Christmas Past **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** The Booze Cruise III **11.00** Inspector Morse **1.15** Wycliffe **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.40 Film: The Great Outdoors (1988) **1.45** FYI Daily **1.50 Film:** The Great Outdoors (1988) **2.30 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **3.30** FYI Daily **3.35 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **4.15 Film:** Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey (1991) **5.15** FYI Daily **5.20 Film:** Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey (1991) **6.10 Film:** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20 Film:** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969) **9.00 Film:** The Specialist (1994) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** The Specialist (1994) **11.10 Film:** Inside Man (2006) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Inside Man (2006) **1.50** Hell on Wheels **2.45** Movies Now **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.05 Melissa & Joey **1.00** Black-ish **2.00 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **4.00** The Goldbergs **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1 (2011) **11.20** Gogglebox **1.25** Rude Tube **2.30** The Inbetweeners **3.25** New Girl **5.00** Revenge

Film4
11.00 Black Nativity (2013) **1.00** Step Up (2006) **3.05** Carry On Regardless (1961) **4.55** Chalet Girl (2011) **6.50** Men in Black 3 (2012) **9.00** Bridesmaids (2011) **11.25** Devil's Due (2014) **1.10** Terminator Salvation (2009) **3.30** Close

Star Reader Travel
Hand picked holidays with you in mind

HOT NEW WEST END SHOWS FOR 2017

Your Chronicle in association with Omega ABTA The Travel Association

CAROUSEL
AT THE LONDON COLISEUM
KATHERINE JENKINS AND ALFIE BOE WILL STAR FOR THE FIRST TIME TOGETHER IN THE WEST END
Fifteen years after getting caught up in an armed robbery and taking his own life, the charming carousel barker Billy Bigelow gets a chance to return to earth and make amends. Discovering that his daughter Louise has grown into a lonely, troubled teenager, haunted by her father's legacy, Billy vows to restore pride to his family in the musical voted by Time as the greatest of the 20th Century. Features much-loved classic songs 'You'll Never Walk Alone', 'If I Loved You', 'Mister Snow' and 'June is Bustin Out All Over',
5 weeks only - from 7 April 2017

DREAMGIRLS
THE MOST ANTICIPATED MUSICAL OF THE YEAR
Thirty-five years after the groundbreaking original Broadway production, this UK and West End premiere of the sensational and iconic Tony Award®-winning musical DREAMGIRLS comes to London, starring Amber Riley. DREAMGIRLS transports you to a revolutionary time in American music history and charts the tumultuous journey of a young female singing trio from Chicago, Illinois called 'The Dreams'. They learn the hard lesson that show business is as tough as it is fabulous.
Booking until 6th May 2017

BAT OUT OF HELL
THE MUSICAL
... GLOWING LIKE THE METAL ON THE EDGE OF A KNIFE
Jim Steinman's epic rock and roll theatrical fantasy BAT OUT OF HELL THE MUSICAL, the inspiration for one of the most iconic and successful albums in history, is set to explode onto the London Coliseum stage in 2017. BAT OUT OF HELL is a romantic adventure about rebellious youth that tears through over 15 of Jim Steinman's classic songs.
55 performances only June – July 2017

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CHOICE

Gabby Logan

Sports Personality of the Year 2016 (BBC1, 6.40pm)
Gary Lineker, Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present this year's ceremony live from the Genting Arena in Birmingham. Tennis star Andy Murray was presented the prestigious main award in 2015 and is in contention once again after a stellar year that saw him win Wimbledon, claim his second Olympic gold medal and remarkably overhaul Novak Djokovic to end 2016 as world number one. However, he is likely to face stiff competition from other Rio medallists, such as Mo Farah, Laura Kenny and Alistair Brownlee. The Team of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Young Sports Personality of the Year and Unsung Hero awards will also be handed out.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Rebecca Ferguson. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Flog It! (R) **2.10** Elizabeth at 90 – A Family Tribute. (R) **3.40** Planet Earth II. (R) **4.40** Songs of Praise. **5.15** BBC News. **5.30** Regional Programme. **5.40** Countryfile.

6.40 Sports Personality of the Year 2016. Gary Lineker, Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present this year's ceremony live from the Genting Arena in Birmingham. Tennis star Andy Murray was presented the prestigious main award in 2015 and is in contention once again after a stellar year that saw him win Wimbledon, claim his second Olympic gold medal and remarkably overhaul Novak Djokovic to end 2016 as world number one.

9.00 The Apprentice. After 11 weeks of challenges that have seen the teams selling sweets, crowdfunding and becoming personal shoppers in a leading department store, the final two battle it out to go into partnership with Alan Sugar. Their final task is to launch their businesses and present their ideas to an audience of industry experts at City Hall, London. But they need assistance, so former contenders return to help each finalist as they come up with brands, devise campaigns and make TV adverts. Will the industry bigwigs like their ideas? And who will have done enough to convince Lord Sugar to pick them as his partner? Last in the series.

10.00 The Apprentice: You're Hired. Rhod Gilbert is joined by the winner, the runner-up and Lord Sugar himself, as the business tycoon reveals the reasons behind his final decision. Last in the series.

11.00 BBC News.

11.20 Regional Programme.

11.30 Walliams & Friend. Meera Syal becomes David Walliams' latest "friend", joining forces with him in a variety of sketches. A number of celebrities also make fleeting appearances. (R)

12.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You. Gary Lineker hosts an extended edition of the satirical quiz. **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.05** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **8.05** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** Super Powered Owls: Natural World. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** A to Z of Christmas Cooking. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Tom Kerridge Cooks Christmas. (R) **1.30** Equestrian: Olympia 2016. **4.35** Full Steam Ahead. (R) **5.35 Film:** The Terminal. (2004) An Eastern European en route to America is stranded after a coup in his homeland. Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

7.40 Victoria Wood as Seen on TV Special. Comedy sketches written by and starring Victoria Wood, with Julie Walters, Celia Imrie, Duncan Preston and Susie Blake. (R)

8.20 Best of British: Victoria Wood. The comedian and writer looks back on her career in a programme originally broadcast in 1998. She reflects on her childhood in 1960s Lancashire and her long and successful career as a performer. Featuring contributions from regular collaborators Julie Walters and Celia Imrie, and famous fans including Clive James, Thora Hird and Caroline Aherne. (R)

9.00 Victoria Wood's Midlife Christmas. A festive special from 2009 that attempts to cram an entire night's Christmas viewing into 60 minutes. Highlights include the Midlife Olympics 2009, popular costume drama Lark Pies to Cranchesterford and the adventures of soap star Bo Beaumont, played by Victoria's long-time collaborator Julie Walters. Others joining in the fun are Delia Smith, Jayne Torvill, Christopher Dean, Reece Shearsmith and Anton Du Beke. (R)

10.00 Victoria Wood: At it Again. A filmed performance at the Royal Albert Hall, taken from the comedian's 2001 UK tour.

11.30 Film: Last Chance Harvey. (2008) A miserable New Yorker falls for an equally unfulfilled woman he meets while in London to attend his daughter's wedding. Romantic drama, starring Dustin Hoffman and Emma Thompson.

12.55 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.50** Holby City. Essie's feelings towards Parker lead her to make a questionable decision. (R) **2.50** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.25** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.30** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25 Film:** All Stars. (2013) **11.20** Let's Do Christmas with Gino & Mel. (R) **12.15** ITV News; Weather. **12.20** Off Their Rockers. (R) **12.50 Film:** The Incredible Hulk. (2008) Comic-book adventure, starring Edward Norton. **2.55 Film:** National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. (1989) Comedy, starring Chevy Chase. **4.45 Film:** Santa Claus: The Movie. (1985) Family fantasy adventure, starring Dudley Moore.

6.40 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.50 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 All Star Mr & Mrs Christmas Special. Phillip Schofield hosts a special festive edition of the game show, in which celebrity guest couples reveal how much they know about each other – or not, as the case may be. The contestants are Dominic Brunt (Emmerdale's Paddy Kirk) and his wife Jo, boxer Lennox Lewis and his wife violet and T'Pau singer Carol Decker and her husband Richard.

8.00 Midsomer Murders. Christmas special of the detective drama. The village of Little Auburn has stood abandoned since the Second World War, but now plans are afoot to restore it to its former glory. However, the grand reopening takes a grisly turn when a man is murdered. DCI Barnaby and his new partner DS Jamie Winter are soon on the case, and must unravel a web of lies connecting past and present to bring the killer to justice. Neil Dudgeon stars, with Nick Hendrix making his debut as Barnaby's latest assistant. Guest starring Hugh Dennis and Sally Phillips.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Film: Hot Fuzz. (2007) A zealous policeman is relocated to a sleepy country village. Action comedy, starring Simon Pegg.

12.35 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.10** Frasier. (R) **7.40** Frasier. (R) **8.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **8.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Lewis vs Nico: F1 2016. **2.05 Film:** Inkheart. (2008) Fantasy adventure, starring Brendan Fraser. **4.10** The Snowman. (R) **4.45** Channel 4 News. **5.10 Film:** Cars. (2006) Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Owen Wilson and Paul Newman.

7.30 Britain's Wildest Weather. Footage of unusual weather conditions recorded in Britain during 2016, and exploring the factors that led to these incidents. The programme features footage recorded by people caught in the middle of floods, super-storms, tornadoes and lightning strikes, as well as a look at how a record level El Niño effect altered Britain's weather.

9.00 Humans. In the aftermath of the silo tragedy, Hester seeks revenge on Leo, while Karen decides she and Sam have no future, and decides to take matters into her own hands. Niska plans to return to Berlin with Astrid, but struggles with the idea of abandoning her family, and Joe makes a shocking confession to Laura. Last in the series.

10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.05 Film: About a Boy. (2002) A womaniser who poses as a father to meet single women changes his ways after befriending a lonely youngster. Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Toni Collette and Nicholas Hoult.

12.55 Film: Before I Go to Sleep. (2014) A woman who cannot retain her memories tries to piece together her past, and fears her husband is hiding something from her. Thriller, starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth. **2.25** 60 Days in Jail. Jeff pursues a friendship with a duplicitous inmate and ends up in a dangerous situation. Zac receives a visit from his wife and Tami's feud with Barbra continues. (R) **3.20** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **4.15** Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and (R) **5.10** Supershoppers. Claims of huge reductions by high-street discount stores. (R) **5.40** The King of Queens. Doug plans a Valentine's Day meal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Monkey. **6.05** Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.40** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Jelly Jamm. (R) **10.00** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.00** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.30** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.30 Film:** A Perfect Christmas List. (2014) Drama, starring Ellen Hollman. **2.15 Film:** Lost Letter Mysteries for Christmas. (2014) Festive comedy, starring Eric Mabius. **4.00 Film:** The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey. (2007) Family drama, starring Tom Berenger. **5.45 Film:** Scrooge. (1970) Musical fantasy, starring Albert Finney.

8.00 Michael Buble at Christmas. The Canadian crooner's fifth festive special sees him take to the stage of the Orpheus Theatre in Los Angeles, with guest appearances by Celine Dion, Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings, and Tori Kelly. The music features classics such as White Christmas, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas, Jingle Bells, This Christmas and Here Comes Santa Claus. Michael also performs the premiere of his new Christmas song, The More You Give (The More You'll Have). (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Film: Hercules. (2014) Premiere. The ancient Greek warrior becomes famous as highly exaggerated tales of his exploits spread throughout the land. He is forced to live up to his mythological status when he joins forces with a group of mercenaries to restore a deposed king to his rightful throne. Action adventure, starring Dwayne Johnson, Ian McShane and John Hurt. Includes 5 News at 10pm.

10.55 Film: Snitch. (2013) A man volunteers to become an undercover informant in a drug trafficking operation to save his son from prison. Crime thriller, starring Dwayne Johnson.

1.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Yorkshire Vet: Winter on the Moors. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Danielle de Niese: The Birth of an Opera **8.00** The Barber of Seville from Glyndebourne **10.45** Lucy Worsley: Mozart's London Odyssey **11.45** Horizon: Solar Storms – The Threat to Planet Earth **12.45** How to Build a Jumbo Jet Engine **1.45** Inside Porton Down: Britain's Secret Weapons Research Facility **2.45** How to Build Britain's Secret Engineers **3.45** Close

ITV2
12.20 You've Been Framed at Christmas! **1.20** The Smurfs: A Christmas Carol **1.45 Film:** Santa Paws 2: The Santa Pups (2012) **3.40 Film:** Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas (2004) **5.05** Catchphrase Christmas Special **6.05** The X Factor Winner's Story **7.10 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **10.00** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.55** Bordertown **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.45 Agatha Christie's Marple **1.45 Film:** Columbo: The Conspirators (1978) **3.45 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **5.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Meet the Penguins **9.00** Alexander Armstrong's Land of the Midnight Sun **10.00** Wycliffe **11.10 Film:** Wimbledon (2004) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** Wimbledon (2004) **1.05** Lewis **2.55** Wycliffe **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.30** You're Only Young Twice **5.55** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
1.25 Film: Rio Bravo (1959) **4.15 Film:** The Horse Soldiers (1959) **6.40 Film:** Diamonds Are Forever (1971)**9.00 Film:** The Deer Hunter (1978) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** The Deer Hunter (1978) **12.45** Hell on Wheels **1.40** Quincy ME **2.45** Ironside **3.40** Tommy Cooper **4.10** The Wine Show

E4
12.00 Film: Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **2.00** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas **2.25** The Goldbergs **5.05** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2 (2012) **11.20** Tattoo Fixers **12.25** Gogglebox **1.30** The Inbetweeners **2.35** New Girl **3.45** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **1.00** The Tale of the Princess Kaguya (2013) **3.50** Miracle on 34th Street (1994) **6.05** The Karate Kid (2010) **9.00** Knight and Day (2010) **11.10** August: Osage County (2013) **1.30** Before the Devil Knows You're Dead (2007) **3.50** Close

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
A Christmas Reunion, Channel 5, 5.15pm
High-flying executive Amy inherits half of her aunt's bakery, but the catch is the remaining share has been left to her former high-school sweetheart. The pair are reunited in their home town just in time to organise the annual Christmas cookie contest. Romantic drama, starring Denise Richards and Jake Busey. (2015)

TUESDAY
Forgetting Sarah Marshall, ITV, 10.40pm
A musician is devastated when his actress girlfriend leaves him, and he tries to cure his broken heart with a holiday in Hawaii. Unfortunately, his efforts to forget the past are scuppered when his ex turns out to be staying at the same resort with her new boyfriend – a successful rock star – in tow. Romantic comedy, starring Jason Segel and Kristen Bell. (2008)

Saving Mr Banks, Friday, BBC2, 8.30pm

WEDNESDAY
Wanted, ITV, 10.40pm
A disillusioned man learns his father was a member of a secret society of superpowered assassins dedicated to eliminating people who are destined to commit acts of evil in the future. Having inherited his father's special abilities, he is recruited into the organisation and must take on a former member who has betrayed it. Action adventure, starring James McAvoy, Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman. (2008)

THURSDAY
Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa, BBC2, 11.05pm
The hapless local radio DJ ends up in the centre of a crisis when a colleague gets fired by the station's new owners, only to respond by returning to the studio with a shotgun and taking hostages. The police enlist Alan's aid as a negotiator, giving him the chance to revive his own flagging public profile. Comedy, starring Steve Coogan and Sean Pertwee. (2013)

FRIDAY
Saving Mr Banks, BBC2, 8.30pm
Premiere. Walt Disney tries to persuade the creator of Mary Poppins to part with the movie rights to her beloved creation. Fact-based drama, with Emma Thompson, Tom Hanks, Paul Giamatti and Colin Farrell. (2013)

Series proves it is far from an amateur affair

They say that roles for people of a certain age are rare, and that if you're an actress over the age of 40, you may as well forget it.

Well, try telling that to Sally Wainwright, the woman behind two of the BBC's biggest drama hits of the last five years – Happy Valley and Last Tango in Halifax.

The former won't be back on our screens for a couple of years, apparently, because Wainwright is so busy working on other projects, but it's provided Sarah Lancashire, who is 52, with arguably the best role of her career, that of gritty policewoman Catherine Cawood.

She also appears in Last Tango and has been Bafta-nominated for both parts (winning for Happy Valley in 2014).

"When you read Sally's scripts, they're not like scripts, they're like transcripts of people's lives and they breathe immediately," says Lancashire of Wainwright's work. "Her words do it for you, you don't have to think about it too much; in fact it's often best to let her writing do it for you. She's just top of her game really."

But Lancashire isn't the only actor to benefit from Wainwright's Last Tango – its leads are portrayed by Anne Reid (81) and Derek Jacobi (78), while Nicola Walker (46) also appears.

If you haven't caught the series by now, what have you been doing? You've certainly been missing a treat – the tale of seventysomething former teenage sweethearts Alan and Celia finding love again after 60 years apart is touching, moving and, at times, hilarious. It's also inspired by Wainwright's own mother who reconnected with an old flame she hadn't seen since she was 15.

It's almost two years since we last caught up with them, and this new, two-part episode picks up where the previous series left off, with Celia's daughter Caroline (Lancashire) still coming to terms with the death of her wife Kate.

Perhaps it's her struggle to cope that inspires Caroline to consider a fresh start away from the Harrogate home she shares with Alan and Celia. Regular viewers will be aware that Caroline bought her ex-husband out of the property with financial help from her mother and stepfather – so where will her decision to move on leave them?

For now, that remains a mystery, and the couple don't seem unduly concerned about their fate either – perhaps because they are too wrapped up in the local amateur dramatics group to notice; Celia's debut in a leading role in Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit seems to be taking all their time, attention and energy.

Meanwhile, somebody should keep an eye on Alan's daughter Gillian. She's a bit of a loose cannon at the best of times, but she seems to be sailing close to the edge as mysterious goings-on in her farm's barn lead her to believe that the past is coming back to haunt her.

The concluding part airs on Tuesday, but there is some good news – a fourth is on its way.

Derek Jacobi stars in Last Tango in Halifax, Monday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Sir Lenny Henry – A Life on Screen
BBC2, 9pm
When Lenny Henry won the New Faces talent show in 1975, those watching probably never expected him to go on to be an acclaimed Shakespearean actor and knight of the realm. In fact, we boldly suggest that Henry himself probably thought that such a twist in his life and career seemed highly unlikely. But during his 41 years in the public eye, Sir Lenworth George Henry, to give him his full name, has used his talents in a wide variety of genres, from comedy to drama, to writing and stand-up, not to mention TV presenting, music and, of course, Shakespeare. As a result, Henry fully deserves this tribute to his career, which features clips from various projects, as well as interviews with friends and colleagues, and with the man himself.

TUESDAY
Hilda Ogden's Last Ta-ra – A Tribute to Jean Alexander
ITV, 8pm
She may have moved out of Coronation Street in 1987 after a 23-year stint, but Hilda Ogden remains one of British soap's most iconic characters. So it's only fitting that ITV is paying tribute to the actress who played her, Jean Alexander, who died in October. The documentary features contributions from former colleagues William Roache, Michael Le Vell and Sally Dynevor, who also enjoy watching classic moments in a special recreation of Stan and Hilda Ogden's famous living room. Younger members of the Corrie cast also celebrate Hilda's legacy and famous fans, including Paul O'Grady, provide their own memories.

WEDNESDAY
This Time Next Year
ITV, 8pm
Davina McCall meets Rebecca and Richard Francis from Camarthen in Wales who are hoping to finally be able to extend their family and have a child. After suffering a number of miscarriages and unsure if this is linked to Rebecca's diabetes, the couple are hoping a new treatment method will allow them to finally have the baby they long for. The presenter also meets Luke Reeson who was hoping to make the GB Paralympic swim team and head to Rio. The 27-year-old from Cumbria took up swimming after suffering a gunshot wound to his leg and groin whilst serving in Afghanistan and found a new career path. Will Luke be able to achieve his dream and earn a place on Team GB?

THURSDAY
Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 8pm
The Royle Family star Ricky Tomlinson sets out to trace his family tree. The actor is well known for playing the archetypal scouser – and it turns out his Liverpool roots run deep. Ricky discovers that he comes from generations of carters, who transported goods on Liverpool's docks when the city was the British Empire's busiest port. Ricky's rage and sorrow grow as he discovers how dangerous conditions were for his ancestors, eerily echoing his own fight for workers' rights as a trade unionist in the 1970s.

Hilda Ogden's Last Ta-ra – A Tribute to Jean Alexander, Tuesday, ITV, 8pm

FRIDAY
Strictly Len Goodman
BBC1, 7pm
It's the end of a Strictly era – head judge Len Goodman is hanging up his 'seven' paddle and stepping down from the panel. We'll still get to see him offer his opinions on the Christmas special, but this programme serves as his goodbye as he looks back over his time on Strictly – and seeing as he's been there since the first episode, it also functions as a history of one of Britain's most popular shows. Few people could have guessed when the pro-celebrity ballroom challenge began in 2004 as part of Sport Relief that it would become such a ratings juggernaut, turning the judges and many of the professional dancers into celebrities in their own right. Here, some of the cast members past and present share their memories of the Strictly experience – and Len.

Wild Tales from the Village
BBC2, 7.30pm
Documentary following the animals that live near a remote rural French village, including red squirrels, dormice and stone martens. As the wildlife struggles to survive the winter, they take full advantage of living so close to unsuspecting humans in their search for food, while trying not to be detected.

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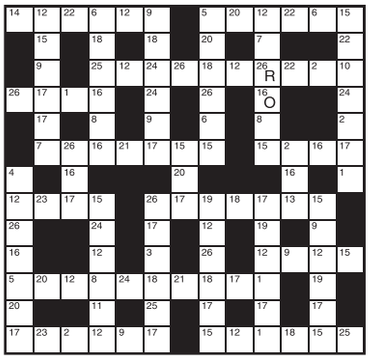
BRAIN GYM No.408

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to start you off.



1	14
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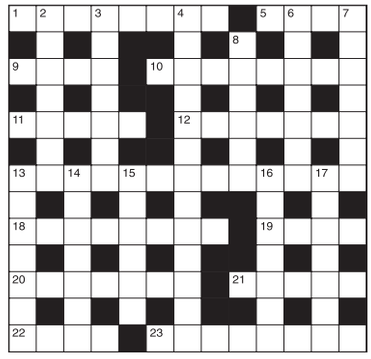
13	26 R

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
C	S	K	H	N	P	T	U	B	J	A	X	R
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	F	L	Z	Y	O	M	W	G	I	Q	D	V

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Helps to define the goal of angry lawyers (8)
5. Pick out the place (4)
9. It turns on an opponent (4)
10. Subdued, having arrived after it's finished (8)
11. Wordy form of gift (5)
12. Horsemen surround a group of attackers (7)
13. Device that should catch on, if handled properly (9,4)
18. Gives information which could head to making an arrest (8)
19. French girl returns if encored (4)
20. Understand and cash in (7)
21. A rash sort of girl (5)
22. The ultimate in saltshakers (4)
23. Living wages? (8)

Down

2. Sounds like a private bitterness that's harboured (7)
3. It's important to one's standing as a rider (7)
4. Meet and strive to make some display (13)
6. One in a seaside feature breaks new ground (7)
7. Crime that no tears can undo (7)
8. Making an attempt to be difficult (6)
13. Not a specific officer (7)
14. Overhead lines (7)
15. Serene number in tartan (6)
16. Ian felt unusually swell (7)
17. Casual worker not on duty (3-4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. For common use (8)
5. Lave (4)
9. Sharp (4)
10. Pertinent (8)
11. Soothes (5)
12. Building (7)
13. Alluring beauty (13)
18. Upright (8)
19. Pit (4)
20. Income (7)
21. Wrath (5)
22. Sediment (4)
23. Remembered (8)

Down

2. Total (7)
3. Least (7)
4. Retaliation (2,3,3,2,3)
6. Greed (7)
7. Heat (7)
8. Careless (6)
13. Rules (7)
14. Coming (7)
15. East (6)
16. Titular (7)
17. Genuine (7)

Sudoku

	9						8	
		3			9	6		7
1				4		2		5
		4	1		5			
5	2				3		6	
		9	8		2	1		
4		7		3				6
		8	5			7	4	
	6				4		3	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	2	9	1	8	5	3	6	7
1	6	5	4	7	3	9	2	8
7	3	8	6	2	9	4	1	5
5	7	3	2	6	4	8	9	1
8	4	6	7	9	1	5	3	2
2	9	1	3	5	8	7	4	6
3	1	7	8	4	2	6	5	9
6	5	4	9	1	7	2	8	3
9	8	2	5	3	6	1	7	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Blench; 4 Hither; 9 Keep open house; 10 Natural; 11 Beech; 12 Jiffy; 14 Stare; 18 Amour; 19 Outcast; 21 Regimentation; 22 Tenant; 23 Stages. Down: 1 Baking; 2 Electric organ; 3 Choir; 5 Inhabit; 6 Housebreaking; 7 Re-echo; 8 Bells; 13 Fireman; 15 Carrot; 16 Bound; 17 Stands; 20 Tract.
QUICK - Across: 1 Riddle; 4 Abound; 9 Dispassionate; 10 Clotted; 11 Incur; 12 Ducat; 14 Shame; 18 Erect; 19 Radiant; 21 Premeditation; 22 Resist; 23 Heyday. Down: 1 Reduce; 2 Dissoluteness; 3 Least; 5 Bookish; 6 Unaccompanied; 7 Dreary; 8 Aside; 13 Artless; 15 Helper; 16 Frail; 17 Stingy; 20 Drape.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. How many gallons are there in a bushel?
2. With which composer is the Malvern Festival associated?
3. Who succeeded Robin Cook as Foreign Secretary in 2001?
4. The Lourdes shrine is a shrine to which saint?
5. What is a mandrill?
6. Who won a Victoria Cross for leading the Dam Busters' raid?
7. Which journalist wrote Princess In Love with the assistance of James Hewitt?
8. Of which range do the Tatra Mountains form a part?
9. What was Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I's nickname?
10. In medicine, what does the acronym SIDS stand for?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Mitford sisters; 2 Sea lion; 3 Japan; 4 Arnold Wesker; 5 Modulator-demodulator; 6 Uma Thurman; 7 Plato; 8 City of London; 9 Requiescat in pace; 10 St James.

Niner: ATROPHIES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

56123 gives an African country,
4382564 gives a Eurasian country,
97365482 gives a Latin American country.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

The Lowry houses a gallery dedicated to the artist's work and two theatres

Salford Quays in all its night-time splendour

The Imperial War Museum North is a must-see attraction for Quays visitors

The Lowry Outlet mall is popular with shoppers

Nothing to match this Lowry spot as the Quay to brush up on history

SO I saw this fellow in Manchester with a picture frame and asked him where he'd got it. "It fell off the back of a Lowry," he said.

By Mark Shipp

Welcome to Salford, where the artist is key – or should that be quay? – to a great deal of what this corner of the north west has to offer.

Home to MediaCityUK, where 27,000 BBC staff are employed, and where ITV favourites such as Coronation Street are filmed, Salford Quays is a big draw.

An idyllic waterside destination, it boasts entertainment, arts culture, a myriad of places to eat and shop and attracts around seven million visitors a year, bringing in £400m to the local economy.

Located alongside the Manchester Ship Canal, the quays has a gallery dedicated to the work of the painter LS Lowry, who has many pieces depicting the city's industrial landscape. It's a fascinating insight into his life and works, with video footage to boot. Visitors will see that there was more to the artist than his matchstick men figures, with seascapes a particular feature.

The Lowry also houses two theatres and a drama studio. With its 1,730 seats, the Lyric also has the largest stage of any UK theatre outside London. My partner and I were treated to a show at the smaller venue, The Quays, with the terrific Opus 7 combining circus acts with accomplished musicianship.

For our short break, we stayed at the four-star Copthorne Hotel, enjoying its comfortable rooms and views overlooking the quayside. It is ideally located, being less than a mile away from the top tourist attractions, which also include the Imperial War Museum North and the Lowry shopping outlet, housing the likes of M&S, Body Shop and Gap.

Just a short walk across the canal took us to all these major sights. But if football is your thing, you cannot escape the shadow of Old Trafford – home to the Salford lot, as I like to call them.

Rooftop

There, fans can enjoy the Manchester United Museum and tour, while Hotel Football, the world's first soccer-themed hotel is located opposite the stadium and offers matchday hospitality and a rooftop football pitch.

The award-winning Imperial War Museum North is an absolute must, particularly in such a poignant year of the Battle of the Somme's centenary. From a timeline of conflicts, to talks and displays, it provides an important lesson for children, to learn of the sacrifices made and about genuine times of hardship and fighting spirit.

The exhibition, Fashion on the Ration: 1940s street style gave a glimpse at military uniforms and how civilians dressed throughout the decade.

Further sightseeing is on offer with cruises along the canal. And if venturing into Manchester itself, call in at Ziferblat.

A Russian concept, Ziferblat is a pay-as-you-go cafe where everything is free, except for the time spent in there. For 6p a minute, one can help themselves to as much tea, cake and biscuits as they want, chill out with their laptops or even play board games. But do your own washing up.

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PROPERTY

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Much-improved detached is ideal for a growing family

This impressive detached four-bedroomed modern family home is a great space ideally suited to meet a growing family's needs.

Situated in a popular location in a good catchment for local schools it is also within comfortable reach of local amenities, shops, and public transport links together with good road networks for the commuter.

It is for sale through Flint & Co at £249,950.

The accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a guest WC, a lounge, a study, a newly fittted kitchen, a utility room, a dining room, a conservatory, a master bedroom with en-suite, a further three bedrooms incorporating fitted wardrobes and a family bathroom.

The property also has double glazing, gas central heating, a driveway and a garage with electricity supply. In more detail the block paved driveway provides ample parking.

The entrance hall has stairs off to the first floor landing. The lounge has a bay window and a feature gas fire set in a contemporary surround and carpeted flooring.

The dining room has laminate flooring and is open plan through to the conservatory which has an insulated ceiling, laminate flooring and French doors leading to the rear garden.

The kitchen comes with an integrated double oven with a four ring gas hob and extractor over, integrated dishwasher, integrated microwave radiator, integrated fridge and freezer and floor tiling throughout.

The utility room has a sink, units and floor tiling and a door to the outside.

The study/playroom has a window to the side, as does the guest cloakroom/WC.

The master bedroom overlooks the front and has an en-suite shower room including a chrome designer radiator and contemporary fittings.

Bedroom two has built-in wardrobes and overlooks the front.

Bedroom three has views over the rear, laminate flooring and a built-in storage cupboard.

Bedroom four overlooks the front and has laminate flooring and a storage cupboard.

The bathroom has a contemporary suite including a bath with a shower over. a glazed side screen and tiling.

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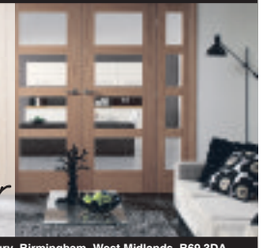

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Work Undertaken
Servicing and Repairs
Bathroom and Kitchen Installation

07852 150057

Gas Safe Register 221874

KEN BANNISTER
Plumbing and Heating

All Plumbing, Central Heating undertaken.
NO JOB TOO SMALL
Free estimate and advice
07964 997 845
0121 557 5958

IJL GAS & PLUMBING SERVICES

INSTALL SERVICE & REPAIR
on all Boilers and Heating Systems
Bathrooms, Showers and all plumbing work
Over 25 years experience
Service and repair on Cookers and Fires
24 HOUR EMERGENCY CALL OUT
Landlord Certs and **FREE** Quotes
CALL IAN 07907 186028 / 0121 588 8414

Gas Safe Register

P.S. Heating & Plumbing

Combi Boiler change from £950
Specialists in Biasi / Baxi / Worcester Bosch / Vaillant Boilers plus many more
SPECIAL OFFERS ON FULL HEATING SYSTEMS
NATURAL & LPG GAS
Fully Insured up to £2 million
Free Quotation
07961 140885
Gas Safe Register 301067

Steve Smith Gas Services
07817 906745/ 01562 730882

- Landlord Checks • Spare Parts
- General/Breakdown Service
- Maintainance and Installations of Cookers, Fires etc • Gas Cowls and Flue Liners
- Ex British Gas over 24 years experience

Gas Safe 550781

Skip Hire

RUSSELL'S SKIPS

MINI/MIDI SKIPS

(0121) 520 3388
07721 387990

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

Roofing

ALL WEATHER ROOFING

Slating, Tiling, New Roofs, Flat Roofs, Chimneys, Guttering, Ridges, Flashings, uPVC Fascia Cladding
FREE ESTIMATES • FAST RELIABLE SERVICE
Over 30 years experience
0121 420 1582
NO CALL OUT CHARGE
Mobile Number: 07947 839451
allweatherroofingwestmids.co.uk
allweatherroofinguk@outlook.com

Tom Corbett Roofing Services

Telephone: 0121 5800915 Mobile: 07931 344199

- Flat Roof Repaired or Renewed
- Slate & Tile Repairs
- Ridge, Hip & Chimney Repointing
- Gutter Replacement & Cleaning

30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE
FREE QUOTATIONS

A1 Little Job Man

(Part of the Imperial Residential Group)
Over 35 years experience

- Fast Roof Repairs • Felt Work & Guttering
- New Roofs Chimneys & Valleys
- uPVC Fascias & Guttering FREE Quotes
- All Building Work Undertaken
- All Work Guaranteed • All Areas Covered

FMB

0121 553 3020

To advertise your business and reach more than 61,597 potential customers...

1. Call us on... 01902 319590
2. E-mail us at... mark.moore@expressandstar.co.uk
3. Post to... Mark Moore, Sandwell Chronicle, Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury B69 2DG

Buy and sell with ClassifiedsAds

1. Visit our ClassifiedAds website
www.classifiedads.expressandstar.co.uk

2. Call our Classified sales team on **01902 317 878**

3. Self Serve - Create your own advert in print and online - visit:
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

Brought to you by **Express & Star**

Classified Ads

Buy Local, **Sell** Local

Index

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2 Leisure Time
3 Home & Services
4 Pets & Animals
5 Business & Farming
6 Property
7 Jobs
8 Motoring
9 Local Information
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FreeAds

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY

For items up to **£250**

VISIT:

bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

Simply press the free ad icon.
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.
Private advertisers only.

Place a paid for advert

By Phone 01902 317878
8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri.
Closed Sat/Sun and Bank Holidays

Online
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

In person
At your local Express & Star Office. Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm Monday - Friday for the next day's advertisement or also before 3.00pm Friday for Monday's advertisement.

funeral directors

24-26 Birmingham Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4DS T: 0121 552 1170

359 High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9QG T: 0121 314 8964

www.centralengland.coop

Turn To Us For Help and Support

In your time of need we'll take care of all the funeral arrangements.

- Est. 1907
- 24 hour service

G. Gibbs
Funeral Directors
44 All Saints Way
West Bromwich B71 1PZ
0121 553 0442

Dignity
Part of Dignity plc. A British Company.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY SCOOTERS from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

2 Leisure Time

caravans / motorhomes

We Want Your Motorhome
Finance Cleared
Fast Secure Payment
Top Prices Paid
Please Call
AEG on 01384 848439 or Lee Jinks on 07740 895448
www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk

sports & leisure

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

mind, body & soul

clairvoyance

CLAIRVOYANT JOHN STARKEY Appointments, Home visits & Telephone readings 01902 334 224

3 Home & Services

household appliances

A BIG SALE NOW ON Gas and electric cookers, fires, autos, fridge freezers, tumble dryers, built in ovens, hobs and lots more. 01902 403770 Past and Present 24-26 Church St, Bilston (opp town hall).

in your garden

AT C B SHEDS & FENCING We supply/fit. Free quotes. Supply sleepers & decking 01922 720270.

items wanted

ALL GOLD 9CT £300 PER OUNCE
CASH PAID TODAY
No amount is too small
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester Moorcroft •Lladro • Old coins
• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY
• Diamonds and Gold Coins • Clocks • Paintings
• ALL SILVER • All Oriental Items
Pre'47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

pc's, laptops & accessories

CLIENT COMPUTERS
Certified technician & Microsoft partner.
Repair & maintain laptops and PCs. In West Midlands.
Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
0121 556 9481

specialists at your service

appliance repairs

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 / 07801 746853.

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

aerials

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191
Brought to you by Express & Star

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
AERIALS FITTED FROM £75
WE'LL BEAT ANY QUOTE
Work Guaranteed
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857
VISA MasterCard CheckATrade.com

building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including: Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

AD DAMP PROOFING
APPROVED CONTRACTOR
All damp problems, roofing, all building & alteration work
FREE QUOTES
07538 118034 or 01902 752161

building supplies

QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING @ low prices. Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

cctv

RAPID SECURITY CCTV & alarms cameras, supplied and fitted, domestic and commercial, same day service, free call out. Call Robbi on 07960 173589/ 0800 633 5899.

carpentry & joinery

B & S JOINERY Six internal pre-primed doors fully fitted from £350. 07958 552625,

CARPENTRY AND JOINERY Kitchens, fitted wardrobes, doors, flooring, staircases and refurbs. 07903 234137 or 0121 4939733.

carpet & upholstery cleaning

A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
OAP discount. Recession Prices.
Unbeatable Value: Rooms cleaned from £10
Call Paul 07870 341089

carpet fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598/07941 619694.

christmas trees/wreaths

christmastreesatapl.co.uk Check above website or call 0121 505 3558 for quality real trees, blocked and netted.

fencing

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

PORTWAY FENCING

CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"

Michael - Portway Fencing.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191
Brought to you by Express & Star

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards **£695**
HEAVY DUTY PANELS SUPPLIED AND FITTED
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

gas fitting

GAS SERVICES
- Boilers
- Cookers
- Fires
- Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

house clearances

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

I average around 1 to 2 phone calls a day from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels.

Mr Causer.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191
Brought to you by Express & Star

painters / decorators

DECORATOR
ALL domestic work undertaken
Reliable & Affordable
Special rates for OAPs
No job too SMALL
Call
07957 346 059

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

plastering

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

removals

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
07749 941319

A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN, Removals, clearances, large/small. 01902 741546, 07899 635852.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

roofing

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

skip hire

A absolute affordable skip
RUSSELL SKIPS
Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
(0121) 520 3388 / 07721 387990

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE

CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy! It definitely works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191
Brought to you by Express & Star

GOLDSHILL SKIPS
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
0121 557 3346

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation, Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Express & Star

THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.

So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

business directory

commercial premises

STORAGE UNITS TO LET
800sqft and 1600sqft.
Burntwood area.
Ring Michael Bailey, 07538 867585.

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

J9 Accommodation
NO DEPOSIT
★MOVE IN TODAY★
Studios *from* **£90pw***
Rooms *from* **£65pw***
*Includes Most Bills
CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
01902 213121
J9accommodation.com

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

TIPTON 1 & 3 bed flats available. DSS may be considered. 07572 144637 or 07961 301577.

properties wanted

Any Property Wanted
PROUDLY REGULATED BY:

ClassifiedAds BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.

Black Country Homes

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL **01902 319 191**
Brought to you by **Express & Star**

Home Cash Buyer

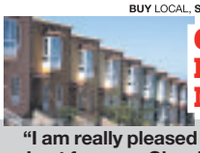
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start

Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**
- ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
- COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
- FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
- FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
- LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
0121 405 0767
*Terms and Conditions apply
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

ClassifiedAds BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL



CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"
Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL **01902 319 191**
Brought to you by **Express & Star**

7 Jobs

courses

ADR COURSES WITH CRH
Now back in the Black Country. From W/C 26th Sept 0121 3231777

motor trade

FULLY SKILLED MECHANIC - West Bromwich area. £25-£30k plus bonus. Tel Tim 07974 938001.

office & secretarial

ACCOUNTS/ ADMINISTRATOR
Up to 16 hours per week

Experience of Sage software or similar is preferred

Good numeracy and literacy skills are essential

Flexible working hours are available

To apply call 07703 787744 or 0121 505 1132

full time - general

Cheshire Care Services
Flexible Support Worker Vacancies
Full Time and Part Time Opportunities Available to work across the different provisions including Independent Living and Respite.
Desirable specifications:
- NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care
- Minimum of 6 months experience
- Understanding of Complex Needs
- MAPA Trained
- Ability to be flexible across all the services

You will need to be fully flexible over a 7 day period working alternate weekends.
(Part time contract - will consist of 16 hours and include 1 sleep per week)
(Full time contract - will consist of 37.5 hours and include 2 sleeps per week)
Competitive rates of pay.
If you would like to be considered for this opportunity then please contact John Fogarty on 0121 552 5552.

SELL YOUR HOUSE
✓ COMPLETION TO SUIT
✓ GENUINE CASH BUYERS
✓ ANY CONDITION
✓ WE WON'T BE BEATEN ON PRICE
A BLACK COUNTRY COMPANY RUN BY WOMEN!
0800 634 7059 24/7
or 0121 487 0300
www.anypropertywanted.co.uk

Express & Star

FIXED PRICE RECRUITMENT PACKAGE

FILL YOUR NEXT VACANCY WITH OUR BRONZE FIXED PRICE RECRUITMENT PACKAGE

Bronze package includes:
- 5cm x 2 column advert in Express & Star (Thursday)
- 5cm x 2 column advert in Chronicle of your choice
- Two week listing on jobs.expressandstar.com
- 5 line advert to appear in Express & Star Classified jobs for 5 nights
- We will run the lineage and online advert on a daily basis until you fill the vacancy

Package Price £399*

JANUARY SPECIAL OFFER
Book a January recruitment package and get a second package at **half price** within 6 months

*All prices are subject to VAT

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

BARGAIN
BLACK CORSA
1.2, 3 dr, 5 seats, recent MoT due end 2017, lady owner, 80,000 miles, Aux/CD player. Sold as seen.
£1,800 ono
07890 387533.

CHEVROLET SPARK PLUS
62 Reg., MoT August 2017, 5Dr, fsh, light blue, 13,700 miles, still under warranty, lady owner, cheap tax, low insurance group.
£3,300 o.n.o.
07984 207513.

MUST BE SEEN
SUZUKI JIMNY
53 reg, MoT October 26, 2017, blue/silver, alloys, new front tyres/battery, 48,000 miles, excellent runner and mechanics.
£2,500 ono.
01785 715886.

BARGAIN
VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 1.8 VVT
2009, 94,000 miles, 6 months MoT, good all round condition.
£2,750 o.n.o.
07909 229016.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

BARGAIN
CITROEN PICASSO
05 Reg., MoT to July 2017, reverse parking sensors, 71,000 miles, good condition.
£850 o.n.o.
07803 314129.

BARGAIN
PEUGEOT 206 QUICKSILVER
02 reg, Silver/grey, 97,000 miles, new front suspension, new battery, new clutch and cable, 11 months MoT, good little runner.
£500 ono.
0121 5597864 or 07578 776587.

BARGAIN
ROVER 75 CONNOISSEUR TOURER
02 Reg., silver with blue leather interior, all electric, MoT March 2017.
Very good condition.
£550 ono.
07459 073762.

IDEAL FIRST CAR
VAUXHALL CORSA ENVOY 12V
1000cc, X Reg., petrol, MoT November 2017, 58,000 miles, completely genuine car, green metallic paintwork.
£400.
07974 961659.

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
www.expressandstar.com/bookanad

VAUXHALL CORSA SXI
2005, 93,500 miles, black, electric windows, electric mirrors, MoT, central locking, alloys, CD.
£750 ono.
07909 847769.

driving tuition

Homer's
10 Hours £125! Four Hours £40!
2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered
ADI/PDI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10
07432 458100 / 01562 870050
01384 234954 / 0121 5640090
01902 580065 www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

ANGELLA DAVIS (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 23 Woodfield Avenue Oldbury West Midlands B69 4TB, who died on 11/05/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 24/02/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
BACHES LLP
Lombard House Cronehills Linkway
West Bromwich West Midlands B70 7PL
T489294

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Economy
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/16/60069	Junction Propco S.A.R.L	Gallagher Retail Park Axletree Way Wednesbury	Proposed 1 No. retail unit (Class A1) with associated works and landscaping.

This is a major application.

DC/16/60083	Mr Jes Jutla Darlaston Builders Merchants	Darlaston Builders Merchants Black Lake West Bromwich B70 0PL	Proposed removal of condition 2 (DC/16/59746) for change of use to builders merchants with ancillary showroom.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR NICK BUBALO, Director – Regeneration and Economy

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Falcon Road, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2016, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Falcon Road, Oldbury (Fairway Road – Ferndale Road). Traffic will be diverted via Falcon Road, Kestrel Road, Ferndale Road and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 17/02/17, effective from 26/01/17. Purpose – works to a gas main by Balfour Beatty for National Grid Gas.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Tame Valley Canal, Great Barr) (Temporary Public Right of Way Closure) Order 2016, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit pedestrians from proceeding via Tame Valley Canal (public right of way) between Old Walsall Road and Hill Farm Bridge. Pedestrians will be diverted via Newton Road, Monksfield Avenue, Longleat, Wilderness Lane to Rushall Canal and vice-versa. Work is expected to be completed by 31/03/17, effective from 09/01/17. There will be no diversion route signed for pedestrians. Purpose – works to resurface the footpath by Canal and River Trust.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Sabell Road and Ford Street, Smethwick) (Temporary Road Closures) Order 2016, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along the following roads in Smethwick: 1) Sabell Road – Totnes Road to High Street. Vehicles will be diverted via Sabell Road, Silverton Road, White Road, High Street and vice-versa (anticipated dates 03-16/01/17); 2) Ford Street – Kelia Drive to High Street. Vehicles will be diverted via Ford Street, Bleak Street, Devonshire Road, Dibble Road, High Street and vice-versa (anticipated dates 06-17/02/17). The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 17/02/17, effective from 03/01/17. Purpose – gas main replacement by Balfour Beatty for National Grid Gas.

THOMAS HENRY FURNIVAL (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 20 Bristnall Hall Road Oldbury West Midlands B68 9TS, who died on 30/10/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 17/02/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
ADCOCKS SOLICITORS LIMITED
27 Lombard Street Lichfield
Staffordshire WS13 6DP
T489072

10 Personals

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

personal

FEMALE, 70 PLUS YEARS
Happy, youthful, GSOH, seeking male to accompany lady, to share dining out, occasional day activities, possible dancing, theatre, n/s necessary, believes in mutual respect, honesty and sincerity. Cannock and surrounding area.
Photo please (returned)
Box Number P20649, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

SLIM, FIT, EX PROFESSIONAL WIDOW IN 70's
WLTM Man with car, 50-70 for Friendship and Fun.
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2013/63 **ASTRA 1.6 SE** 5dr, Black, 31,097 miles £7888
2015/65 **ASTRA 1.6 EXCITE** 5dr, White, 13,125 miles £8995
2015/15 **ASTRA 1.6 SRi** 5dr, Silver Lake, 17,224 miles £8995
2015/65 **ASTRA 1.6 DESIGN EST** Parking Sensors, Silver, 5,717 miles £9750
2016/16 **ASTRA 1.4T ENERGY** New Model 5-dr, Silver, Demo, 850 miles £14,995
2016/16 **ASTRA 1.0T Ri** New Model 5dr, Red, Demo, 1,000 miles £15,995

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2014/14 **CASCADA 1.4T SE CONVERTIBLE** Black, 13,123 miles £12,695

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2013/63 **CORSA 1.2 SXi** AC, 5dr, Start Stop, Red, 28,973 miles £6450
2014/14 **CORSA 1.2 LIMITED EDITION** 3D Grey/Black Roof, 15,432 miles £7250
2014/14 **CORSA 1.4 SRi** A/C, 3dr, Red, 20,114 miles £6995
2015/65 **CORSA 1.2 DESIGN** Alloys, 5dr, White, 14,760 miles £7888
2015/65 **CORSA 1.2 DESIGN** A/C, Alloys, 5-dr. Grey, 12,803 miles £7995
2015/65 **CORSA STING R** 3dr, 1.0T Olympic White, Demo, 4,000 miles £7995
2016/16 **CORSA 1.4T SRi** 3dr, VX Line, Red, 1,559 miles £10,650
2016/65 **CORSA VXR 1.6** Sensors, Performance Pack, White, 3,011 miles £15,995
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2015/15 **MOKKA 1.6 SE** Leather, Boracay Blue, 6,130 miles £12,250
2015/15 **MOKKA 1.6 SE** Leather, Alloys, Boracav Blue, 14,661 ..... £11,850
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2016/16 **VIVA 1.0 SL WINTER PACK** 5dr, Silver, Demo, 1,000 miles £8995

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2013/63 **ZAFIRA 1.8 DESIGN** Nav 7 Seats, Grey, 23,931 ..... £7850
2015/65 **ZAFIRA TOURER 2.0 SRi CDTi XP KIT** White, Demo, 8,340 miles £16,995

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VAUXHALL

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, December 15, 2016

Skoda to the four . . . award-winners

By James Parker

ŠKODA's remarkable awards collection has been added to once again with no fewer than four new titles. The Citigo, Fabia, Yeti and Superb have all been named as the best in class by CarBuyer – one of the UK's most respected online motoring websites.

Unlike many industry awards, CarBuyer avoids the jargon that comes with traditional sectors and categories, concentrating instead on the kind of criteria that real-world motorists use when buying a car.

The Citigo was named Best First Car for the second year running, confirming its status as one of the most affordable and easy to drive small cars in the business.

Best First Car for the second year running, Citygo

Skoda Fabia was named Best Small Car

Taking Best Car for Under £150 a Month was the Yeti

Value

Commenting on the award, CarBuyer editor Stuart Milne said: "With prices starting at less than £8,300 and a range of stunning finance deals, it's great value to buy, and with 68.9mpg fuel economy possible and insurance groups as low as 1E, its running costs are among the lowest in the business."

Not to be outdone by its smaller sibling, the Fabia saw off strong competition to be named Best Small Car. The CarBuyer judges praised the supermini's refinement and high equipment levels, and commended its wide range of engine options.

"Practicality, value for money and reliability are essential ingredients for today's small-car buyer, and with those factors in mind, you simply can't do better than the Skoda Fabia. Interior space is remarkable, with a 330-litre boot and plenty of head and legroom for four or five passengers" commented Stuart Milne.

In what was Škoda's most successful CarBuyer Awards to date, the Yeti was also honoured – driving off with the 'Best Car for Under £150 a Month' title.

Explaining the decision, said: "The Škoda Yeti is one of our favourite small SUVs thanks to its superb build quality, efficient engines and engaging driving experience.

Remarkable

"So it's all the more remarkable that you can park a Yeti outside your house for less than £150 a month on a Personal Contract Purchase (PCP)."

Completing remarkable haul of titles, the Škoda's Superb Estate was named Best Estate Car. The judges praised the Superb's exceptional 660 litre boot and welcomed the attention to detail that marks the estate model out from its sector competitors.

Stuart Milne added: "The best estate cars offer more than just plenty of space for your luggage. They provide well thought-out solutions to all kinds of everyday problems. No car does this better than the Superb Estate.

"Umbrellas in the doors and grippy cup-holders that allow you to unscrew bottles one-handed all contribute to making this such a brilliant car."

Cannock's Graham Machin, Clubman of the Year, receives his award from league president John Priest

Umpire of the Year Trevor Cotton collects his award from John Priest at the Banks's Stadium

Junior Performance winner Chris Becker with John Priest

Milford haul bowls over Staffs Clubs cricket rivals

MILFORD HALL walked off with an impressive haul of silverware at the Staffs Clubs' awards night.

The league brought the curtain down on another successful summer at Walsall Football Club's Banks's Stadium with former England, Leicestershire and Kent wicketkeeper Paul Nixon the guest of honour, entertaining the 100-plus audience with tales from his 23-year playing career.

League secretary Kevin Herbert said: "Paul was very good. He spoke for about 40 minutes about his playing days and then did a lengthy question and answer session with the audience.

"He signed a load of books throughout the evening and never refused a photograph or an autograph. He was very amenable.

"It was a very good and enjoyable evening and a great way to end a successful season."

Milford had most to celebrate after a fine summer that saw them clinch promotion to the Birmingham League after winning the Premier Division title.

Crowned

They also doubled up by lifting the first team Knockout Cup while the second team were crowned Premier A champions. For good measure talented youngster Chris Becker picked up the Junior Performance of the Year award.

Among the other accolades that were dished out, Cannock stalwart Graham Machin was a worthy winner of the Clubman of the Year award while Trevor Cotton was Umpire of the Year.

The night capped an impressive season for the league that saw the introduction of a new playing format in the top three divisions with 11 games played under the old system that included the possibility of a draw and 11 played on a straight win or lose basis with restrictions on the number of overs a player could bowl.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"It was a very good and enjoyable evening and a great way to end a successful season."

"The switch in playing format was well received by the clubs," said Herbert. "It was obviously new to the captains and teams but the feedback we have received has been very good.

"You obviously need a minimum of five bowlers in the win or lose format. And I think you end up with the strongest team coming out on top as opposed to the team with the strongest overseas player.

"The plan was for the format to run for two years and it will be reviewed over the winter.

"We are slightly concerned at the number of conceded games, especially in the lower divisions, but all in all it was a successful season.

"I think Milford were worthy winners in the end and as a league we wish them all the best for next season in the Birmingham League," added Herbert

Springvale and Rugeley will be playing top flight cricket next season after gaining promotion from Division One with just one side, Bloxwich, relegated due to the fact no Staffordshire sides came down from Division Three of the Birmingham League. Elford are joining the league next season while Springvale are entering a third team and Wightwick will a fourth.

Staffs Clubs roll of honour:

Premier Division: Winners Milford Hall; runners-up Beacon.

Premier A: Winners Milford Hall; runners-up Aldridge.

Division 1: Winners Springvale; runners-up Rugeley.

Division 2: Winners HGBU; runners-up Old Wulfs.

Division 3: Winners Wolverhampton; runners-up Burntwood St Matthews.

Division 4: Winners Wombourne; runners-up Rushall.

Division 5: Winners Wightwick & Finchfield; runners-up Beacon.

Batting - Premier Division: Brian Barnard (Cannock) 1044 runs. Premier A: Shafqat Hussain (Aldridge) 671. Division 1: Stuart Jones (Coseley) 849. Division 2: Mohammed Ajmal (HGBU) 734. Division 3: Hassan Touqeer (Wolv) 758. Division 4: Tim Davis (Milord Hall) 588. Division 5: Michael Jones (W+F) 519.

Bowling - Premier Division: Ejaz Nawaz (Milford Hall) 51 wickets. Premier A: Matthew Richards (Penn) 32. Division 1: Mohammed Sultan (Rugeley) 57. Division 2: Ben Hallam (OWT) 51. Division 3: Joey Brew (Wolv) 42. Division 4: Ryan Dewsbury (Wightwick & Finchfield) 46. Division 5: Neil Walker (Beacon) 40.

Clubman of the Year: Graham Machin (Cannock CC).

Performance of the Year: Muhammad Sultan (Rugeley).

Junior Performance of the Year: Chris Becker (Milford Hall).

Umpire of the Year: Trevor Cotton.

Knockout Cup - First team: Winners Milford Hall; runners-up Cannock.

Second team: Pelsall; runners-up Penn.

Third team: Wednesbury; runners-up Burntwood St Matthews.

Rugeley's Muhammad Sultan is presented with his Performance of the Year award

Paul Nixon, Milford Hall skipper Harry Flowers and Alex Williams, director of league sponsors Cicada Sports

Sport

Cricket club success knocks rivals for six

Page 35

Boss wishes skipper well as he leaves

BIRMINGHAM boss Graham Drury says double title winning skipper Tom Perry leaves the club with his best wishes. Perry has returned to local rivals Cradley for the 2017 season after two memorable years with the Surestop Brummies.

Drury admits it will be "strange" not having Perry in his own side for next season but insists Birmingham will still build a team more than capable of making it a trio of consecutive National League titles.

Said Drury: "Being the league Champions with seven outstanding riders always means you're going to have to make some pretty big changes. We were always realistic with the fact that we would have to lose three, potentially even four, of that title winning side.

"Unfortunately, Tom Perry is the first rider who we have lost and when Cradley decide that they wanted him back, it was out of our hands in many respects.

"On his average, it was proving hard to put a draft team into place where Tom fitted in nicely and the numbers game can be cruel in this sport.

"However, there are no hard feelings whatsoever; Tom has been an absolutely fantastic servant to Birmingham Speedway and he will always be popular among our supporters.

"He has been an outstanding captain of the team and he has always given it 110 per cent out on track. Tom leaves with our best wishes.

"The AGM takes place this Tuesday and once rules and regulations have been finalised, we will be able to crack on with our own team planning.

"I think some clubs have been quite foolish in being presumptuous regarding the rules for 2017 and I've been in this game long enough to know that can come back and bite you on the backside."

MP Valerie to kick off new stand for reborn Darlaston

WALSALL MP Valerie Vaz will be helping Darlaston Town (1874) celebrate yet another landmark with the official opening of the club's new 50-seat spectator stand. It is further helping the club get over the dark days of 2013, when the original Darlaston Town FC folded after 139 years in existence.

After a 12-month fundraising campaign a group of supporters reformed the club in 2014 and the phoenix club registered with the West Midlands Regional League in 2014/15 and was promoted in its first season and are currently lying 6th in the West Midlands League Division One. The club moved to its current home at the Paycare Ground, Bentley Leisure Pavilion in January 2014 and since then has spent more than £30,000 improving the dressing rooms, clubhouse and ground and spectator facilities.

The MP is carrying out a ceremony before the team's Birmingham County FA Vase game against Midland League Alvis Sporting FC on Saturday at 1.15pm. The new development has allowed the club to meet the required FA National Ground Grading Criteria.

Karate trio have eyes on Olympic prize

From left, Emily, Jessica and Chloe

THREE teenage karate stars are eyeing up the 2020 Tokyo Olympics after picking up a glut of medals at the European championships.

Between them Chloe Machin, aged 18, Emily Johnson, 16, and Jessica Whitehead, 13, came back from Belgium with three golds, two silvers, and four bronze medals for Wadokai England.

All three girls hope to be picked again for the next European championships in 2017 in Sardinia, Italy, followed by the 2018 worlds in Leicester. The bigger prize for the three Mushindo Wadokai members, who train at Bradley Senior Citizens Centre in Bilston, is that karate will be included in the summer Olympics for the first time in 2020.

"It means a lot representing England at European and World Championships but representing Great Britain at the Olympics would be a step above," said Machin, of Walsall.

She attended Pool Hayes Comprehensive, in Willenhall, and Walsall College and has been practising karate for seven years, representing England at four European Championships. She has eight European medals.

Johnson, a second Dan black belt, from West Bromwich, attends Sandwell Academy. She holds five European medals.

Whitehead, from Heath Hayes, of Erasmus Darwin Academy in Chasetown, has been in the England squad for three-and-a-half years, winning seven European medals.

BAGGIES DON'T FEEL THE BLUES

WHEN Manchester City blitzed Albion at The Hawthorns, I wrote that better teams would be blown away by Pep Guardiola's team this season.

Despite the one-sided scoreline, that was not an embarrassing result. But based on Sunday's performance at Stamford Bridge, perhaps it's time to start reconfiguring Albion's expectation levels.

City themselves were outplayed by Chelsea a week previously, and the league leaders have swept allcomers aside ever since Antonio Conte switched to a 3-4-3 formation.

The Baggies, however, were not swept anywhere and they arguably gave the best team in the country their toughest match in weeks.

It was hardly surprising; Tony Pulis is a master at this. Before the game, Darren Fletcher described him as a 'tactical genius', and there's no doubt the Welshman would have been rubbing his hands in anticipation for this game. It posed him an exciting new challenge; how to deal with Chelsea's marauding wing-backs.

The answer lay in two incredibly disciplined performances from Matt Phillips and Chris Brunt. As soon as Chelsea won possession, Albion's wingers immediately dropped back alongside the back four to create an inpenetrable back six.

In many ways, this was a retro Pulis performance, a backs-to-the-wall masterclass that showed Pep and the rest of the league how to defend properly.

Chelsea only mustered one shot on target from open play, and they scored from it.

The difference though, between this season and last, has been the counter-attacking. Chris Brunt and Salomon Rondon both went close in a first half where Albion had the best chances.

Just as important for the supporters is the fact this sort of performance is no longer the norm. Albion have been far more adventurous over the past few weeks, which gives Pulis the chance to set his team up defensively for games like this. Last season, sticking 10 men behind the ball and failing to find the net got tempers flaring. But this season, the team are praised for their commitment and Pulis is praised for his tactical nous.

Cup windfall aids junior team

Wood Green Athletic Under-17s have had a share of the sale price of the Wednesbury Charity Cup

A JUNIOR football team are celebrating a surprise £1,000 windfall – thanks to the sale of one of English football's oldest trophies.

The 136-year-old Wednesbury Charity Cup, recently restored to its former glory, was bought at auction by the National Football Museum for £7,250.

The sale boosts Wednesbury-based Wood Green Athletic Under-17s, who were promised 15 per cent of any price it fetched.

The cash will be enough to pay off this season's pitch fees and more. Manager Pete Mansell said: "It is hard to find the words to explain feelings when you know everything this season is already paid for.

"The money will mean a huge amount."

Wood Green, who play in the Bilston Youth Partnership League, were contacted by jeweller Aaron Sheldon, who had the cup restored to its former glory.

"We expected it to go at around £4,000 but there was a bit of a bidding war and it went for a lot more."

Mansell said: "It was a shock when Aaron first called and said he wanted us to have some money. It was an even bigger shock when he called to say how much the cup had sold for. The money will be a huge chunk of our budget for the rest of the season."

In addition to paying off their pitch fees, Wood Green plan to spend the rest of the cash on club trophies and training tops.

Originally purchased by Wednesbury businessman Isaak Griffiths in 1880 for £100, the cup predates the Football League and was devised in order for charities to benefit from growing popularity in the sport. Nottingham Forest and Wolves were among the early winners, while non-league Cradley Town were the last in 1991, with the cup spending most of its later history as a tournament for semi-professional teams.

Wellborn's ticking over for next bout

ROWLEY Regis' Jason Welborn marked 11 years as a professional boxer after recording victory in his 25th paid bout on Saturday night.

Welborn is closing in on his 20th pro success after a 19th win on the MGM Birmingham promoted show in Solihull, *writes Craig Birch*.

The 30-year-old dropped late replacement Casey Blair twice en route to a resounding four round points verdict at the Tudor Grange Leisure Centre.

He now reflects on the result some 11 years on from when he first stepped through the ropes as a paid pugilist on 12 December 2005.

Welborn, aged 19 at the time, took just one minute and 43 seconds to remove Jamie Ambler, in what was supposed to be a six-round contest at middleweight.

He has since become a two-weight Midlands champion but national honours have eluded him, challenging for the British title twice and the WBC International crown. He's now settled back into the super welterweight division and is ready to go strong again, as he recalled memories of his debut.

He said: "I remember Audley Harrison had boxed Danny Williams (Commonwealth heavyweight title fight, Harrison lost on a points split decision) a couple of days before. The Express & Star reported that I'd thrown more punches in that one round of my fight than Audley had managed in 12!"

Welborn only managed four more fights between that night and 2011, due to work commitments with his own landscaping business.

But the powerful puncher has stayed active since 2011 and featured in bouts on BoxNation and Sky Sports, the stage he's looking to get back to. He said: "I'll be sensible over Christmas and keep myself ticking over, then I'll be ready to go again in the New Year."

Hughes loses out to Durrant in final

TIPTON'S Jamie Hughes has been thwarted again by Glen Durrant after they contested the final of the BDO Finder Darts Masters final in Holland.

Their fourth of meeting of 2016 saw Durrant again come out on top 5-3.

The 30-year-old Hughes began his challenge in a competition he won two years ago at the Hotel Zuiderduin in Egmond aan Zee on Friday night seeing off Martijn Kerkmaker 5-3.

He then defeated Darius Labanauskas 5-2 to set up his best-of-five sets quarter final with Martin Phillips, winning 3-0, to reach the last four, where he vanquished Geert de Vos 3-1, with checkouts including finishes of 150 and 117.

★★★

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Thursday, December 15, 2016

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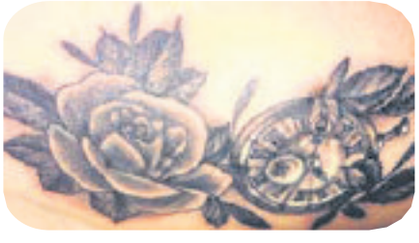

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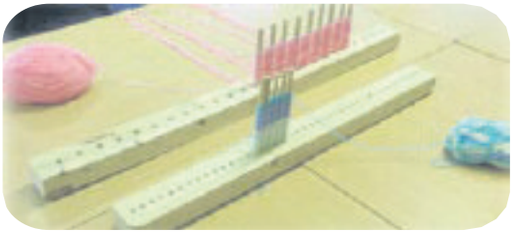

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Tipton College

Alexandra Road
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West Midlands
DY4 7NR
T el: 0121 557 0837

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Thursday	9am - 5pm
Friday	9am - 4.30pm
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Huntingdon Road
West Bromwich
West Midlands
B71 2RP
Tel: 0121 556 7426

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